DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 449 CG 024 378

AUTHOR Youngs, Bettie B.
TITLE A Stress-Management Guide for Young People.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-940221-00-4
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 98p.
AVAILABLE FROM B. L. Winch & Assoc./Jalmar Press, 45 Hitching Post Dr., Bldg. 2, Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274 ($9.95).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; *Anxiety; *Coping; Relaxation Training; *Self Esteem; *Stress Management; *Stress Variables; Time Management

ABSTRACT

This document presents a comprehensive guide to help young people understand and cope with stress, pressure, and anxiety. Adolescent readers are introduced to the concept of stress, the ways that stress can affect them, and the skills and techniques needed to help them learn effective ways to reduce and manage stress. The guide begins by defining stress and looking at both the biology and the psychology of stress. A section on coping with stress explains the stress cycle. A stress test for young adults is provided. A section on strategies for effective coping focuses on thinking about thinking, changing unwanted thoughts, changing negative thoughts, thinking out loud, problem-solving, thinking about consequences, role playing, active listening, giving negative feedback, receiving negative feedback, assertive choice, and communications. Other sections explore the development of self-esteem, time management, managing music and other sounds, school stress, relaxation, and taking care of oneself. Relevant exercises are included for readers to work through in each of the sections of the book. A list of suggested readings and a directory of helping organizations concludes the guide. (NB)

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A Stress-Management Guide for Young People

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I just don't understand my feelings.
You are so lazy.
Why can't you be more like your sister?
You can just pay for that yourself.
It takes teamwork.
Be yourself!
You are just like your father!
Get a job!
Get an education!
Where's your common sense?
Act your Age!
Grow up!
How will I ever get all this done?
I don't like the way I look.
If you do that again
How can you get a "C"?
Don't be late!
Nelson

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Dr. Bettie B. Youngs

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(author of *Stress in Children: How to Recognize, Avoid, and Overcome It*, and *Helping Your Teenager Deal With Stress*)

A STRESS MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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BOOKS:

Stress In Children (New York: Avon Books, 1985)
Helping Your Teenager Deal With Stress
(New York: Tarcher/St. Martins Press, 1986)
A Stress Management Guide For Young People
(San Diego: Learning Tools, 1990)
Problem Solving Skills For Children
(San Diego: Learning Tools, 1990)
Achievement, Happiness, Popularity & Success: A Self-Esteem Book for Young People (PEF, 1989)
Is Your Net-Working? A Complete Guide to Building Contacts and Career Visibility
(New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1989)
Friendship Is Forever, Isn't It?
(San Diego: Learning Tools, 1990)
Goal Setting Skills for Young Adults
(San Diego: Learning Tools, 1990)
Getting Back Together:
(New York: Bob Adams, Inc., 1990)
The 6 Vital Ingredients of Self-Esteem and How to Develop Them in Your Child
(New York: MacMillan/Rawson, 1991)

AUDIOCASSETTES:

The 6 Vital Components of Self-Esteem and How To Develop Them In Your Child (Sybervision, 1990)
Helping Children Manage Anxiety, Pressure, and Stress (Sybervision, 1991)
Developing Responsibility in Children
(Sybervision, 1991)
Helping Your Teenager Deal With Stress
(San Diego: Learning Tools, 1987)
How to Raise Happy, Healthy, Self-Confident Children (Nightengale/Conant, 1990)

A STRESS MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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A Stress Management Guide for Young People

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1. Stress 2. Self-Esteem 3. Youth 4. Psychology

Production Consultant Steve Smith
Photography by Trish Nelson

Library of Congress Cataloging in
Publication Data

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LEARNING TOOLS
P. O. Box 2588
Del Mar, CA 92014

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Third Printing
ISBN 0-940221-00-4

To my favorite teenagers:
Jennifer, Lynda, Dianne, Dean, Amy, Chad,
and Brian

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INTRODUCTION

Virtually no one feels free from stress these days, not even you — the young person — supposedly living out "the best years of your life." But you can learn to minimize the harmful effects of stress by learning ways to effectively cope with it. If you are to maintain a high level of physical and emotional well-being, you, too, must learn to understand stress, its manifestations, and ways to successfully manage it and turn it to your advantage.

What can you do? What information and skills must you know? This is precisely what this book is about.

This book will introduce you, the young person, to the concept of stress, explain how stress can affect you, and provide you with the skills and techniques to help you learn effective ways to reduce and manage stress. Read each section, and work through the exercises provided. You may wish to share your responses with your parents or friends. You'll probably be surprised to learn how much they empathize with the stress that you encounter in your day-to-day activities.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Most people think of stress as the daily demands of life. Technically, these demands are called *stressors* with *stress* being the actual wear and tear on our body. A first step toward understanding exactly what stress is, how it translates into human suffering, how it can be reduced, and the methods through which you can effectively and productively manage it is to look at it as a biological occurrence. The notion that stress is just in the mind is simply not true.

The Biology of Stress

Whether the stressor is a biochemical insult (for example, a dose of drugs or alcohol), a physical injury, or emotional arousal (fear, anger, love), the mind and body respond in the same manner. The response is called *the General Adaptation Syndrome*. It has three stages: (1) alarm reaction, (2) resistance, and (3) exhaustion.

Alarm Reaction. You may recognize some of the following alarm reaction responses from your own experience.

1. Have you ever had "knots," "butterflies," (or "eagles") in your stomach such as before taking an exam or making a presentation in front of others?

   This happens because since it is more important to be alert and strong in the face of danger than to digest food, your digestion slows so blood may be directed to your muscles and brain.

2. Can you remember trying to catch your breath after being frightened (like the time you were at your desk concentrating on your exam when the wind caused the door to slam shut . . .)? This is due to breathing getting faster to supply more oxygen for the needed muscles.

3. Do you remember how your heart pounded when that speeding car wheeled around the corner and just missed you? In such situations the heart speeds up, and blood pressure soars, forcing blood to parts of the body that need it.

4. Have you noticed that you use extra deodorant when you know you are going to be under stress (like making an important presentation with others watching, or asking someone special for a date when you are unsure if that person will accept)? Perspiration increases to cool the body. This allows your body to burn more energy.

5. Do you ever have a stiff neck or chest pain after a stressful day? This occurs because muscles tense in preparation for important action.
6. Have you noticed how quickly some wounds stop bleeding? Chemicals are released to make the blood clot more rapidly. If you are injured, this clotting can reduce blood loss.
7. Remember getting your "second wind" the time your best friend was involved in a confrontation and you rushed to help? Or, were you once surprised by your strength and endurance during the emergency when you could tell from your dog's yelp that he needed help? The extra strength came from sugars and fats pouring into your bloodstream to provide fuel for quick energy.

Resistance Stage. Almost immediately following a stressful event the body attempts to return to its normal balance (homeostasis). This resistance stage essentially reverses the processes described earlier in the alarm stage then the body attempts to adapt itself to a state of calm and tranquility by relowering blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, and core body temperature.

Exhaustion Stage. When a period of intense stress lasts longer than six to eight weeks, the body enters the exhaustion stage. Sometimes this exhaustion is referred to as "burnout." What this means is that your supply of energy is depleted and your ability to withstand stress is lowered.

The Psychology of Stress

How you respond to a stressful event is determined to a great extent by how you interpret the stressor. To some extent then, stress is an individual matter. While two individuals may experience the same stressor, their responses may vary. For example, suppose two teenage boys accidentally lock their keys in the car:

> Evan notices that his keys are missing, traces his steps, finds his keys locked in the car, and simply calls his mother. He doesn't become upset, just annoyed that he will have to wait for his mother to bring the extra set to him, and worried about the inconvenience that he might cause her. When James sees that his keys are missing, he has a totally different reaction. He frantically asks everyone if they have seen his keys, and gets irritated when they don't become involved in helping him locate the missing keys. He can think of nothing else but locating the keys, forgetting to get necessary books and materials from his locker before his next class. For the next three hours he is unable to concentrate on other school activities. He is demanding and

impatient with his friends, and short and unfriendly toward his teachers. He gets a headache and has a nauseous feeling in his stomach. His whole day is shot.

Each young man had the same cause for stress, but it is James' reaction to the stressful event that produced both a physical and emotional response. While stress is no more than physical nervousness to some, it can lead to emotional despair for others.

HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT YOU?

Stress affects you in three ways: physically, emotionally, and behaviorally. Shown below are some of the effects of stress in each of these three categories. Does stress affect you in any of these ways? Read each example, and in the spaces provided list other ways you are affected by stress.

Stress affects me PHYSICALLY. For example:

- My muscles get tense.
- My hands get cold or sweaty.
- My stomach feels as if it is churning.
- I have difficulty sleeping.
- My heart beats rapidly.
- I have sudden bursts of energy.
- I am extremely tired.
- I lose my appetite, or crave certain foods.
- _____
- _____

Stress affects me EMOTIONALLY. For example:

- I get nervous.
- I cry or want to hit out or strike something.
- I feel sad, or giggle a lot.
- I worry excessively.
- I am irritable or feel depressed.
- I have negative feelings about myself.
- I daydream or dream more than usual at night.
- I anger easily.
- I have difficulty concentrating.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Stress affects my BEHAVIOR. For instance:

- I deliberately do subpar work (not caring about how it is done).
- I substitute food, drugs, or alcohol for coping.
- I lose interest in my appearance.
- I use attention-getting antics.
- I become grouchy, irritable, blaming, or sarcastic with family or friends.
- I become abrasive or get into fights.
- I may not tell the truth about something.
- _____
- _____
- _____

WHAT CAUSES STRESS?

Just as important as knowing what stress is, is knowing what causes you stress. Those things that cause stress are called stressors. Can you identify your stressors? The examples shown below are typically stressful for most young people. Read each one and in the spaces provided, add some of your own.

I feel stressed when...

- my parents are really upset with me.
- I have an argument with my best friend.
- I don't have enough money for the things I would like.
- I feel my appearance is not what I want it to be.
- I have too much to do and not enough time to do it.
- I don't know what to do in a given situation
- I loan money to friends and they don't repay it.
- _____
- _____

COPING WITH STRESS

Coping (effectively) means dealing constructively with the stressful event and managing your feelings in a positive way. When you are able to cope, you feel "in charge." Being in charge gives you the confidence to handle the situation. However, when you feel that the events in life are getting out of hand, you may feel out of control. No one likes feeling out of control, or powerless. The goal is to get back in charge, to handle the situation in an acceptable manner.

Are you aware of how you cope in stressful situations? Some people cope by tuning out, running from, or otherwise avoiding situations that cause stress for them. Others cope by hanging in there when they hit the rough spots, by facing stressful situations head on, confident they can get back in charge. How about you?

How Do You Cope With Stress?

See if you can determine how you cope with stress. Try this exercise. Think of a situation that is stressful for you. It could involve your relationships with other people, school, a job, certain beliefs, or anything else. In the spaces provided below, describe a stressful situation that you now face, then indicate how you plan to cope with it. Fill this in now.

Stressful situation: _____

_____

How I plan to cope with it: _____

_____

You will be coming back to your response later in the "Problem-Solving" section.

The Stress Cycle

When one event leads to another, it can begin a cycle of stress. An important lesson to learn from the *stress cycle* is that when you become overloaded with stress, you are likely to feel overwhelmed and out of control. That can lead to anger. Being angry makes it easy to yell at others or to blame

them for your problems. When you unload or dump your feelings on someone else, it is unfair.

Minimizing Stress. You can minimize the stress you are likely to encounter in everyday situations. You can decide to cope with situations in a healthy and productive manner, or you can decide to let whatever happens, just happen. Look at how 16-year-old Rob recently coped with a typical day. Don't be surprised if you find that many of the things that happened to Rob have also happened to you on your "bad" days. When you finish reading about Rob, see if you can find reasonable clues to the questions following Rob's stress cycle. You may find it helpful to discuss your response to these questions with your parents or friends.

Rob's Day:

1. It's Wednesday. Rob sets his alarm for 7:00 a.m. but it fails to go off. He awakens at 7:35. Because Rob is running late he skips breakfast, forgets to feed the dog, and doesn't make up his room.

2. Rob dashes for the bus stop, but because he is late, he misses the bus. Lucky for Rob, his father has not yet left for work. Rob asks for a ride to school. Reluctantly, his father agrees to take him. Since this will take his father out of his way, he too will be late for an appointment. He is annoyed at Rob because this is the second time this week that Rob has missed the bus. They ride to school in silence. This makes Rob painfully aware of how uhappy his father is with him.

3. Because Rob arrives late to school he must go to the office to get a late-pass before he can be admitted to class. Suddenly Rob remembers that because his father was in a bad mood, he didn't ask his father to write out an explanation for the tardiness. Afraid to call his father, and because Rob doesn't have a pass, he now must sit out first hour in the office.

4. Since he was without a pass and absent from first hour class, Rob missed the science test. His teacher says he will not allow Rob to make up the test since he had an unexcused absence. This makes Rob really upset because he needed that test to improve upon his grade point average in order to keep his eligibility for the tennis team. He is the captain of the team and being removed because of low grades will be an embarrassment. Besides, his dad had promised to contribute half of the necessary money for a car if Rob's grades improve by the end of this semester. Thinking about not being able to purchase a car makes Rob angry.

5. Rob goes to his locker to get his books for second hour class. Searching for his math book, he discovers it missing. His lockermate has inadvertently picked up Rob's book instead of his own. Rob is frantic. When Rob failed to turn in his math assignment yesterday, his teacher warned him not to let it happen again. Now this overdue math paper is in the book his lockermate has, and Rob has no idea where he could be. Rather than face the teacher, Rob decides to skip math class today. Rob feels the tenseness in his shoulders and wishes his headache would go away.
6. Rob's math teacher takes attendance and because Rob is not reported on the absence list, the vice-principal calls his mother at work to inform her that her son is not in school.
7. The bell rings and Rob heads off to third hour class. When friends query and tease him about his whereabouts during second hour, he is rude to them. Being upset with his friends makes him feel uneasy.
8. Rob is standing in the lunch line when he notices his lockermate. "Hey Johnson! You took my math book, you idiot!" Rob calls out. Barney Johnson isn't having such a hot day either, and name-calls back. This is too much! Leaving the line, Rob shoves his lockermate against the wall, ready to hit him when he is stopped by the vice-principal, who is surprised to see Rob. The principal informs Rob about the call he made earlier to his mother.
9. Feeling really frustrated, Rob gives the vice-principal a piece of his mind. This gets him into even more serious trouble!
10. As he is being led to the office by the vice-principal, Rob thinks about the phone call made by the vice-principal to his mother. Knowing his mother has been informed that he's not in school makes him feel even more anxious. He asks if he can use the phone in the office to call her, but is reminded that students can not use the office phone. Rob is not allowed to leave the office now that he's in trouble for fighting, so he is unable to place a call to her from the hall pay phone.
11. Finally, at 3:15, the school day is over.

Whew! Rob had a pretty tense day, don't you think? What do you think went wrong here? How did one unfortunate event lead to another? Could Rob have stopped some of the problems from occurring? How? What coping strategies could he have used to help him better manage his day? Have any of these things happened to you? How did you handle them?

Of course, you could write your own stress cycle script. Everyone has "bad days," but did you notice in the example of Rob how one event seemed to lead to another? What happens to you when an unpleasant event occurs and you aren't able to get in control or stop other events from following? Can you see, as in the example with Rob, how each event influences and often provokes the next one? What can you do?

Understanding how one event leads to another is the first step in coping. You can learn to minimize the harmful effects of stress by learning ways to effectively cope with it. Making stress work for you is getting in control and managing the stress in your life. The following skills are designed to help you learn more about how to break the stress cycle — how to better deal with stress.

A STRESS TEST FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Learning, growing and changing can be stressful all right, but if you are well-informed about stress, you are less likely to be overwhelmed by it. By identifying your stress, you can better learn how to translate stress symptoms into actions. This is the first step in learning how to develop a healthy frustration tolerance to stress, and in learning to remain flexible and how to take daily irritants in stride. This is meeting stress head-on. The Stress Test Table shown below will enable you to determine both the level of stress in your life right now and how well you handle it.

Directions: Read each item and place a check in the space that best represents how you feel. Be as accurate as possible.

	OFTEN (a)	SOMETIMES (b)	SELDOM (c)	NEVER (d)
1. During the past three months, have you been under considerable strain, stress, or pressure?				
2. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms: palpitations or a racing heart, dizziness, blushing, painfully cold hands or feet, shallow or fast breathing, nail biting, restless body or legs, butterflies in stomach, insomnia, chronic fatigue?				
3. In general, do you have headaches or digestive upsets?				
4. Do you have any crying spells or feel like crying?				
5. Do you have any recurring nightmares?				
6. Do you experience pain in your neck, back, or arms?				
7. Do you feel depressed or unhappy?				
8. Do you worry excessively?				
9. Do you ever feel anxious even though you don't know why?				
10. Are you ever edgy or impatient with your parents or other family members?				
11. Are you ever overwhelmed by hopelessness?				
12. Do you dwell on things you should have done but didn't?				
13. Do you dwell on things you did but shouldn't have?				
14. Do you have any problems focusing on your schoolwork?				

		OFTEN (a)	SOMETIMES (b)	SELDOM (c)	NEVER (d)
15.	When you're criticized, do you brood about it?	—	—	—	—
16.	Do you worry about what others think?	—	—	—	—
17.	Are you bored?	—	—	—	—
18.	Do you feel envy or resentment that someone has something you don't?	—	—	—	—
19.	Do you quarrel with your boyfriend/girlfriend?	—	—	—	—
20.	Are there serious conflicts between your parents?	—	—	—	—

		YES	NO
21.	Lately, do you find yourself more irritable and argumentative than usual?	—	—
22.	Are you as popular with your friends as you'd wish?	—	—
23.	Are you doing as well in school as you'd like to?	—	—
24.	Do you feel you can live up to your parents' expectations?	—	—
25.	Do you feel that your parents understand your problems and are supportive?	—	—
26.	On the whole, are you satisfied with the way you look?	—	—
27.	Do you have trouble with any of your teachers?	—	—
28.	Do you sometimes worry that your friends might be turning against you?	—	—
29.	Do you have enough spending money to cover your needs?	—	—
30.	Have you noticed lately that you eat, drink, or smoke more than you really should?	—	—
31.	Do you make strong demands on yourself?	—	—
32.	Do you feel the limits imposed by your parents regarding what you may or may not do are justified?	—	—
33.	Do your parents always criticize you?	—	—
34.	Do you have any serious worries concerning your love relationships with the opposite sex?	—	—
35.	Are any of your brothers or sisters overly competitive with you?	—	—
36.	Do you feel left out in social gatherings?	—	—

		YES	NO
37.	Do you habitually fall behind in your school work?	—	—
38.	Do you feel tense and defensive when you're around someone your age of the opposite sex?	—	—
39.	Have you, or has anyone in your family, suffered a severe illness or injury in the last year?	—	—
40.	Do you experience any conflict between your own standards and peer pressure to engage in certain activities?	—	—
41.	Have you recently moved to a new home, school, or community?	—	—
42.	Have you been rejected by a boyfriend/girlfriend within the last three months?	—	—
43.	Is it very difficult for you to say "no" to requests?	—	—
44.	Have your school grades taken a sudden drop lately?	—	—
45.	Do you often become ill after an emotional upset?	—	—

Scoring: Add up your points based on this answer key.

1.	(a) 7	(b) 4	(c) 1	(d) 0	21.	Yes 4	No 0
2.	7	4	1	0	22.	0	3
3.	6	3	1	0	23.	0	4
4.	5	2	1	0	24.	0	5
5.	6	3	1	0	25.	0	5
6.	4	2	0	0	26.	0	4
7.	7	3	1	0	27.	3	0
8.	6	3	1	0	28.	4	0
9.	6	3	1	0	29.	0	3
10.	5	2	0	0	30.	5	0
11.	7	3	1	0	31.	4	0
12.	4	2	0	0	32.	0	3
13.	4	2	0	0	33.	4	0
14.	4	2	0	0	34.	5	0
15.	4	2	0	0	35.	3	0
16.	4	2	0	0	36.	4	0
17.	4	2	0	0	37.	3	0
18.	4	2	0	0	38.	3	0
19.	5	3	1	0	39.	6	0
20.	5	3	1	0	40.	5	0

41.	3	0
42.	4	0
43.	3	0
44.	4	0
45.	5	0

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What Your Score Means. If your score is in the 0-61 range, you have a relatively low level of stress. In spite of minor worries and concerns, you are not in any serious trouble. You have good adaptive powers and are able to deal successfully with situations that make you temporarily uptight.

A score in the 62-115 range means that the level of stress in your life is moderate, or that you are handling your frustrations quite well. However, because you have occasional difficulty managing the effects of stress, consider some new methods of learning how to better deal with it.

A score in the 116-203 range indicates your troubles outnumber your satisfactions and that you are currently subjected to a high level of stress. No doubt, you are already aware of your problems and are concerned. Review the quiz to pinpoint the major sources of your stress. You should do everything possible to acquire new skills in managing your life. You may want to think about getting some kind of professional help.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COPING

In order to last the distance, you need to have specific coping skills, techniques you can use to manage stress. The following sections are devoted to such skills. Read each skill thoroughly, then practice each one carefully. Don't become upset if a technique doesn't seem to work for you; think of these skills as you would clothing. Try on each, see how it fits, how comfortable you are, then choose the ones that work best for you.

Thinking About Thinking

Sometimes you may think that other people, such as parents or friends, or even the events in life, cause you to feel the way that you do. Thus, you may blame someone else for your feelings of stress and emotional upset. This is faulty or irrational thinking, meaning that you neglect an important factor: the way you **think** influences your behavior and thus your responses to stressful situations. What you say to yourself before, during, and after an incident greatly influences your feelings and behaviors.

Cognitive restructuring is a fancy name for a technique for dealing constructively with feelings of stress that arise from irrational or faulty thinking. Perhaps you have heard someone say, "I can't help the way I feel, it just happens." This assumes that thoughts and feelings occur independently and are not under your control. However, the opposite is true. Rarely does a feeling "just happen." You do have the capability to change the way you feel. It is not so much the presence of irrational ideas that leads to disturbing emotions but the absence of coping skills.

One way of examining the relationship among thoughts, feelings, and behaviors is shown in the following. Point A refers to the activating event. Let's say that you are reprimanded for having failed to follow through on a responsibility (in this case, for not completing homework and taking care of pets). Following this reprimand you may feel upset, angry, or defensive. Point C represents your feelings about the event and it also includes behaviors. For example, upon being held accountable for homework and pet care, you might become defensive and shout back, "Why do I do all the work around here?" In this case, you mistakenly assume that A, the event, has led directly to C, feelings and behaviors. Examine this more closely.

A. THE EVENT

Parent: "I know you wanted to see the 6:00 television special, Jon, but you won't be able to. It's 5:50 and your homework isn't done, and your pet hasn't been cared for as was your responsibility tonight."

C. THE FEELINGS AND BEHAVIORS
(Upset, angry, defensive)

Jon: "Why do I have to do all the work around here?"

Jon assumes that it is his mother who made him upset and angry, and that he therefore has a right to be defensive. After all, she did reprimand him. Something very important occurs between A and C, however, producing B. What we think (our self-talk) influences feelings and behavior. Look at Jon's thinking.

B. JON'S IRRATIONAL THINKING

"Mom is mad at me. She knows how much I wanted to see that television special. If she cared about me, she would let me watch it."

Although Jon's mother did bring up the consequence of "no television tonight," it is Jon's thinking that produced his feelings. In this case, what Jon is thinking is irrational and his thinking affects his behavior in a negative way. Jon is responsible for what he is thinking. A different and more positive scenario on Jon's part might be as follows.

B. JON'S RATIONAL THINKING

"I wish I had completed my chores. My homework is due tomorrow and my dog depends on me for care. It's not too much work, and I did commit to doing it before the program."

Let's see how rational thinking could affect Jon's behavior.

C. THE FEELINGS AND BEHAVIORS

"I'm really disappointed. I knew I should have completed my chores before my friend came over, and I should have told him I would have to visit another time since I had a pretty tight schedule tonight. I really do want my mom to trust me, and to feel that I can be counted on. I should apologize to my mom and explain what happened. I think I'll ask if I can watch the program as soon as I care for my dog. Then I'll ask if I can complete my homework after that."

This example shows that it is not so much the stressful event that made Jon tense, but how he thought of that event.

Changing Unwanted Thoughts

Recognizing that the way you think determines the way you feel may require some changes in your usual way of dealing with yourself and your interactions. The good news is that you can change unwanted or irrational thoughts.

Most people have certain beliefs about themselves that affect their ability to cope. These beliefs come into play sometime between the event and the

response to it. For example, Dean receives a low grade on his first math test (*triggering event*). He tells himself that he is dumb and is not capable of doing the work. He believes that failing the math test is an indication that he will fail all his tests in math (these are his *beliefs about self*). So, he skips math class on the day of his next test (*response*). Thus, Dean's coping style is affected by what he has told himself about his abilities. His decision to skip class was based on these beliefs.

What you tell yourself can either work for or against you. Beliefs that work against you are *dysfunctional*. They put limits on your coping ability. Dean's beliefs about math are dysfunctional. Beliefs that enhance or improve your coping ability are *functional*, that is, they work for you.

Remember that both your functional and your dysfunctional beliefs influence your coping style. You must distinguish between the situation itself and what you say to yourself about that situation. For example, it does not necessarily follow that Dean is dumb and should skip math class simply because he failed one exam.

Once you are aware of the beliefs that work for or against your ability to cope there is a procedure you can use to control these beliefs. This procedure is called *thought stopping*. What this means is that you consciously visualize a stop sign whenever you start telling yourself things that limit your ability to cope. This stop sign acts as a signal to you to stop thinking dysfunctional thoughts. In the previous example, Dean told himself that because he failed a math test, he would fail again and therefore he skipped class to avoid failing again. Such thoughts are dysfunctional. If Dean were to become aware of how these thoughts limit him, he might try using the thought-stopping technique.

The last phase of thought stopping involves *thought substitution*. In place of the old thought, make up a positive, more appropriate assertive statement. Thus, Dean would visualize a stop sign and consciously focus on constructive, functional thoughts such as, "The fact that I failed one test doesn't mean I'll fail all other math tests." "Failing a test doesn't have to mean I'm dumb or stupid, it can mean, I'll study harder next time and attend review sessions and ask for extra help if I feel I need it."

Can you determine if what you tell yourself in a given situation is dysfunctional or functional? Try the following exercise. Then check your responses in the model shown below it.

Situation: You don't have a date on Saturday night.

Dysfunctional Beliefs: _____

Functional Beliefs: _____

Model

Dysfunctional Beliefs: No one asked me out tonight. I must not be popular. I probably bore people so much that they don't want to be with me. No one likes me.

Functional Beliefs: Just because I have no date tonight doesn't mean that no one likes me. It simply means that my friends are busy with other things. It's nice to have some time alone in which to do whatever I want.

Changing Negative Thoughts

You've read about how what you think or say about yourself influences your behavior. If you think that you are not a good student, for example, you will probably find school stressful, and this will contribute to your not liking school. Likewise, if you want someone else's friendship more than they want yours, you may feel unpopular. Changing or "rewriting" the way you think about yourself is a vital skill. When you send mostly positive messages to yourself, you are more likely to feel better about yourself. When you feel good about yourself, you are more likely to do well, to excel in your day-to-day work and in your relations with other people.

You can learn how to reshape negative messages and view them in a more positive light by focusing on the things that you do well. The goal is to value yourself enough to care about who you are, what you are, and how you approach your work, your life, and the people in it. This helps you see yourself honestly. Remember, focus on what you do well. Using the examples below as a guide, try the following exercise.

1. Write a sentence about what you don't like about yourself: _____

   _____

   _____

2. Now, rewrite the above sentence using a positive rather than negative statement: _____

   _____

   _____

Example: I hate the way I look.

Rewrite: I don't enjoy being 15 pounds overweight, but I am healthy and I am attractive. I've lost 2 pounds and I am making an effort to reduce my weight by 10 more pounds over the next 6 months. I have a plan and I am following it.

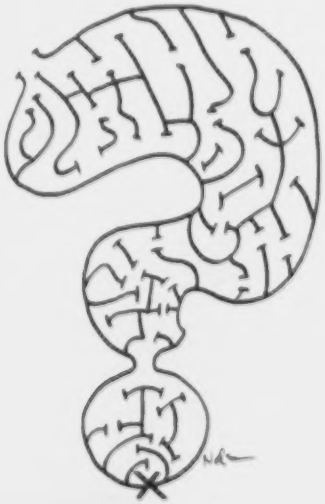
Example: School is hard for me.
Rewrite: I enjoy all my subjects except algebra. I did well in math class, but I don't yet understand all the concepts of algebra. I need more help in that class.

Example: I am unpopular.
Rewrite: I'd like to be friends with Karen and Debra, but I'm not certain they want my friendship.

Thinking Out Loud

Talking to yourself, called *think-aloud* or *thinking out loud*, is something people do a lot, perhaps without even knowing they are using this skill. Sometimes problems occur because you hurry in a situation and react automatically, without thinking. The difficulties might not happen if you would think and talk to yourself. Thinking out loud is a tool that can help guide you through a difficult situation and can help you stop and consider various consequences.

To learn how to use the think-aloud procedure, begin with an example that is quite familiar to you. Find your way through the maze below, noting each step of the process you use to complete it.



Your thinking dialogue probably went something like this:

Let's see, I need to take my pencil and find my way from the start to the finish without crossing any lines. OK, now what's my plan? I can go slowly and look ahead. If I go down this alley it will be a wrong turn, so I should turn around and go back. No, I can't go that way, it's a dead end. Whoops, that lane isn't going to work either. I'll just go back to this lane and try this again. OK, this looks good. I'm making progress now. If I look ahead, I'm less likely to make a wrong turn. Am I following my plan? Yes, I'm going slowly and I'm not frustrated. I'm just about there. Aha, I did it! How did I do? Great! I made a few mistakes, but found my way out in record time!

You have probably had lots of experience doing mazes. They're fun, and though they all differ in complexity, for the most part they are pretty easy. Now, apply the thinking-out-loud skill to a more difficult situation.

The scenario:

It's Tuesday morning. You have just arrived at school 10 minutes later than ususal. The 5-minute tardy bell has just sounded. You need to go to your locker to get your books, set up an appointment with your counselor, stop by the library to return a book that is due this morning, go by the office to turn in a permission slip in order to be excused on Friday for a dental appointment, and buy a lunch ticket. Whew! That's a lot to remember to do in such a short time. See how the think-aloud skill can help you accomplish these tasks in time and without making mistakes.

Your think-out-loud dialogue might go something like this:

"Let's see now, I have only 5 minutes until class. That means I'm going to have to concentrate on what I must get done before class. Since I'm right here, why don't I go to the office first. Where is the permission slip my mom wrote this morning? Here it is. Good, that's done. OK, I was going to talk to the counselor but I better do that during lunch time. I'm afraid that I'll be late if I do it now. I better get the lunch ticket then too. OK, I'll swing by the library next. There's Johnny Watson. Gosh, I'd love to talk to him about last night's soccer practice. I better not, I just don't have the time. How am I doing? Hmmm, 2 minutes to go. Good, the library book is returned, now off to my locker. Let's see, 35 right, 15 left, turn it all the way around, and 25 right. Darn, I'm hurrying too fast. I went right by 25. OK, slow down, let's try this again — 35 right, 15 left, turn it all the way around, now slowly to 25 right. Great. OK, there's the book I need. Let me think, do I need anything else? Oh yes, I was going to have Mr. Winfield look over my Science Fair project before I get it typed up. I'll take that with me now. It will save me a trip later

in the day. How's my time? Great, still 1 minute until class. I'm not going to be late. Nice going!"

Problem-Solving

Having a problem and not knowing how to remedy it can be as debilitating as it is frustrating. But finding a solution and getting out of a dilemma is made even more difficult when you aren't sure of what the problem is, only that a problem exists. In groping for a solution to a problem you may not completely understand, you may act impulsively or make rash decisions. Here is a simple (but very effective) four-step process to help you develop a more organized approach to problem solving.

1. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?
2. HOW CAN I SOLVE IT? WHAT ARE MY ALTERNATIVES?
3. WHAT IS MY PLAN?
4. HOW DID I DO?

Effective problem solving is learned by identifying the real problem, searching for sound solutions, trying them out, then evaluating the consequences. In just a moment you'll return to the "How Do You Cope With Stress?" scenario you wrote and use it to go through this process step by step. But first, here's a scenario for practice.

Fifteen-year-old Sonja has invited Jennifer to her house for an overnight stay. Jennifer, also 15, has told her parents of the plans and has asked for permission to stay out overnight. Upon learning that the plans include dinner and an at-home evening (and assured that Sonja's mother will be there), Jennifer's parents grant permission. When Jennifer arrives at Sonja's house after school on Friday, however, Sonja informs Jennifer that her mother will not be home and that her 18-year-old brother and his friend have volunteered to drive them to the movies. Jennifer and her parents have an agreement. She does not want to break the trust with her parents, but she wants Sonja to accept her, and she also wants to go to the movies. Jennifer's parents are out visiting a friend, so she cannot call and check with them about the new plans until much later in the evening.

Let's analyze Jennifer's problem.

I. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM(s)?
Jennifer has accepted an invitation to an overnight stay based on certain criteria and has assured her parents of her plans; Sonja has changed plans without notifying Jennifer or her parents.

Jennifer's parents are out, and she cannot contact them at this time to get permission regarding the changes.

II. HOW CAN SHE SOLVE IT? WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?

Action: She could go along with Sonja's new plans without telling her parents.
Consequence: She will break the trust she and her parents have established.

Action: She could wait until her parents are home to contact them about getting permission to accept the new plans.
Consequence: It will be too late to go, and everyone will be weary of waiting for her decision.

Action: She could tell Sonja that the new plans sound interesting but that she cannot accept them, since she has accepted the overnight invitation based on a set of criteria and is certain her parents would not approve of the new plans.
Consequence: She will take the responsibility for her decision and run the risk that her friends will mock her.

Action: She could tell Sonja that she is a liar and a poor friend to put her in this predicament.
Consequence: Sonja will feel offended, and it will put a strain on the friendship.

Action: She could leave a message on her parents' answering machine, telling them of the change in plans, and go off to the movies.
Consequence: Jennifer's parents will most certainly feel taken advantage of and may not allow her overnights in the future.

III. WHAT IS THE PLAN?

Jennifer will tell Sonja immediately that the new plans sound interesting but that she won't be able to accept them without first checking with her parents. She'll tell her now so Sonja can make other plans if she wants to.

IV. HOW DID SHE DO?

Great! Sonja was relieved to not have to follow through with her own revised plans. She had felt that her mother, too, would be upset when she learned of the incident.

Now work through the situation you wrote on page 8 by using this four-step approach.

Remember: there is more than one way of handling a problem, not all solutions work equally well, and thinking before you act can lead to a better outcome.

What is the problem? _____

_____

How can I solve it? You can examine the likely outcome of proposed actions by asking a question such as, "If I do that, what would happen?" This question is often followed by "And then what would happen?" Generate many alternatives to the problem, and then assess the potential impact of each option. How could a different alternative lead to a different outcome?

Action: _____

Consequence: _____

Action: _____

Consequence: _____

Action: _____

Consequence: _____

What is my plan? _____

_____

How did I do? _____

_____

Thinking About Consequences

Thinking of a different way to solve a problem is finding an *alternative*. Each alternative has a *consequence*: something that happens as a result of the alternative that is chosen. Try this exercise.

Sixteen-year-old Gene is driving three of his friends to a movie. Suddenly, 17-year-old Tom, a passenger, opens a can of beer in the car.

1. What is the problem here?_____

_____

2. What are Gene's alternatives?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. What is a possible consequence for each of the alternatives above?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Role Playing

Role playing is an effective technique to evaluate the pros and cons of proposed solutions. It also helps you rehearse strategies to the solutions you choose, and then to decide whether you will commit to your choices. For example, Jennifer may want to tell Sonja that she won't be able to go to the movies, but she may be intimidated by the older brother standing there waiting for an answer, or she may lose her courage because she fears Sonja will be angry with her decision.

You can learn to anticipate stressful interactions and then rehearse effective strategies in dealing with them by exchanging roles with the help of a parent or friend. You be Sonja, and have your parent or friend be Jennifer confronting you with her decision. Now be Sonja and respond to Jennifer's decision. Go through each alternative.

Here's an example of how role playing was used by two friends, Julie and Elesia.

The scenario:

Julie has been asked by Ron to go to the school dance on Friday. However, she has now decided she does not want to go out with Ron, and decides to call him with the news. Afraid she won't be able to follow through with the call, Julie asks her best friend, Elesia, to help her role-play it out. Here's how the girls' role playing went.

Test run # 1:

Julie *(pretending to phone Ron)*: Hello, Ron?
Elesia *(playing Ron)*: Hi, Julie!

Julie: I'm calling about the dance tomorrow night.

Elesia *(suggesting one possible response by Ron)*: Oh, I know I'm so excited about it! My dad said I could borrow his car instead of my using my old beat up one. Guess what, Julie, I'm taking us to dinner before the dance, and oh, I bought this really great new shirt and sweater in your favorite color! It's going to be so much fun. I'm so excited. I'll pick you up at 6:30, OK? See you.

Julie *(unprepared for Ron's enthusiasm and afraid to disappoint him)*: Oh, yes, yes, that will be fine. *(She hangs up the phone, really angry with herself muttering.)* I don't care, I'm not going out with him! I'm not! I'm just going to stand him up.

Test run # 2:

Julie *(pretending to phone Ron)*: Hello, Ron?

Elesia *(playing Ron)*: Hello, Julie!

Julie: I'm calling about the dance tomorrow night.

Elesia: Oh, Julie, I'm pleased you called. I'm so ill. I won't be going to school tomorrow, and I won't be able to go to the dance. I'm really sorry. I hope I didn't ruin your plans. Can we talk about it at school next week?

Julie: I'm sorry to hear you aren't feeling well Ron. Yes, we can talk next week.

Test run # 3:

Julie *(pretending to phone Ron)*: Hello, Ron?

Elesia *(playing Ron)*: Hello, Julie!

Julie: I'm calling about the dance tomorrow night. I know it's very late to bow out now, but I really feel that I must. I hope you won't be hurt, and I hope you will have time to make other plans.

Elesia: Well, I'm sorry to hear that Julie. I was really looking forward to going. Are you sure I can't change your mind?

Julie: Yes, I'm sure, Ron. I really must say no. I'm sorry.

Elesia *(sounding disappointed)*: Ok. Bye, Julie. Oh, Julie, if you change your mind, please call me back. Ok? Bye.

Of course there are many more likely responses. But do you see how this kind of rehearsing can help build your confidence in handling situations that have potentially stressful outcomes? As Julie explained it, "Getting

practice was really helpful to me because I really didn't know how to tell Ron that I had changed my mind about going out with him. To tell you the truth, before I role-played with Elesia, I was just going to not be home when he came to pick me up for the date. But standing him up would have been an awful alternative. It would have made him feel really awful and rejected. No one likes to be humiliated. But you know, I didn't really think I had the nerve to call and cancel plans, even though there was no way I was going to go out with him. Role playing gave me the confidence to carry on the conversation I should have had in the first place."

The next phase would be for Julie and Elesia to reverse roles, with Julie playing the part of Ron, and Elesia playing Julie. By exchanging roles you build confidence in your ability to assert your decision. Such preplanning reduces the stress in the situation by lowering the risk that you will be overwhelmed at the time of confrontation. It also provides you with an opportunity to assess your understanding of the situation and your capacity to implement it under stress, such as when Julie had to confront Ron about breaking the date.

Active Listening

Think about people who listen to you with "half an ear." Don't you know someone who continually interrupts you or shows indifference or boredom with what you are saying? You probably feel rejected, inferior, and generally insignificant after speaking with such a person. After all, this person has made it pretty clear that you had nothing to say that held his or her interest. *Active listening* means attending fully to the words someone is speaking and to the feelings he or she is expressing. When you actively listen, you are telling the other person that he or she is valuable, worth your time and attention. In the following example, Chad is an active listener.

Brian walked into the family study where his brother Chad was working on the computer. Brian turned to leave, muttering, "Man, I can never get my homework done around here!" "You sound angry," said Chad. "Are you just angry, or are you angry at me?" Replied Brian, "I'm angry because I have a big homework assignment tomorrow that I don't want to do, and I need to use the computer. I'm not angry at you. I'm sorry for making you feel bad. What time do you think you will be finished working on the computer?"

Active listening is a most effective tool for reducing stress. First of all, it is a defusing device: it defuses anger simply because of the acknowledgment given to one person by another. In this case, Chad's listening and questions made clear that yes, Brian was frustrated and angry. Second, his listening clarified the direction of the anger. Was it a personal, vindictive anger? Or was Brian upset about an event, not with Chad? Brian was actually frustrated with the amount of homework he had to do in a short time. Third, and probably most important in considering reducing stress, active listening allows you to decide whether and how you want to participate in someone else's anger. Active listening entails feedback that is objective and nonjudgmental. Chad has an opportunity to show empathy toward Brian and thus alleviate some of Brian's frustrations. For example, Chad could suggest that Brian use the computer immediately if his own work is not quite as urgent, or the two boys could generate other alternatives. Thus, the brothers have an opportunity to preserve their relationship.

The Communication Process. There are three parts to the communication process. There is always (1) a sender of the message, (2) a receiver of the message, and (3) the manner in which the message is being relayed. The message can be either verbal or nonverbal. When all three parts of the communication process are functioning smoothly, effective communication takes place, and there is little room for misunderstanding. However, if one or more of the three parts are not functioning correctly, the results may be an increase in stress levels and misunderstanding. Suppose a sender of a message has had a bad day and is feeling thoroughly frustrated, as is the case with Brian. Upon finding Chad using the computer, he says, "I can never get any work done around here!" The receiver of the message (Chad), who feels taken aback by the outburst, could take the exclamation personally and think, "My gosh, what did I do?" Active listening is an excellent method of checking out those assumptions; it is a legitimate way of breaking the emotional chain that could have evolved if Chad had replied, "I can't get my work done around here, either, and it's because of your frustration and outbursts!"

Are you a good listener? How can you be certain you are hearing what is being said, not just what you want to hear? The following five steps can help you to listen actively:

1. **Clarify the content of the communication**. Your goal is to understand what is being said.

2. **Verify nonverbal messages**. Observe the body language and the tone of voice of the sender. An active listening response can help you verify what is not being said as well as what is being said.

3. **Gather additional information**. Clarify verbal and nonverbal messages and verify the feelings of the speaker before forming an opinion.

4. **Personalize your response**. Respond with empathy, understanding and acceptance.

5. **Promote getting-in-charge behavior**. Once the speaker has stopped talking, pause for a moment. This allows him or her to reassess the message and reshape it in a more appropriate manner, if needed.

Giving Negative Feedback

How many notes do you write but never deliver? How many dozens of sheets of paper do you cover with your thoughts? How many hours do you spend in front of a mirror practicing speeches that you never give?

What is important, of course, is not how many undelivered messages you composed but why you never sent those messages. The answer is that you were afraid of the response you would get, afraid that you might be laughed at or ridiculed. In most interactions that involve either giving or receiving negative feedback, the emotional consequence of that feedback assumes great importance. This consequence can be either real or imagined, but either way it creates stress for most people.

In *negative feedback situations* we often become concerned either with how the other person will respond to receiving the comment or with how the other person will perceive us when we are giving it. A fear develops that the other person will wind up feeling negative about himself or about us.

Consider Mark, in the following example.

> Mark and his 16-year-old brother, Kevin, share a bedroom. Kevin was repeatedly leaving his clothes and dirty dishes all around their room. Mark would continue to pick them up and Kevin would invariably deposit more. Mark justified not telling his brother how he felt by saying to himself, "Well,

we're never here together for very long, and bringing it up will only start an argument." The straw that broke the camel's back, however, came one Sunday after Mark had spent a considerable amount of time cleaning and preparing for an overnight guest. Mark arrived home with his guest only to find the room a mess: dirty clothes, dishes, and books deposited everywhere. And no sign of Kevin. Feeling frustrated and angry at always having to pick up after his brother, Mark decided it was time to do something. But, Mark dreaded the thought of telling his brother for fear of Kevin's response.

Mark, like many of us, suspects that his brother will respond to this negative feedback by accusing him of calling him a "lazy slob." Mark anticipates that the consequence of his interaction with Kevin will be a confrontation regarding Mark's opinion of him as a person. Now he dreads even bringing up the subject, because of the fear he has about an anticipated battle regarding their feelings towards one another, and he contemplates not discussing it at all.

Now let's switch roles. Imagine that you are Mark.

Your brother walks into the room, and by looking at him you can tell that he is upset. He says in a rather loud voice, "This room is such a mess, that it's impossible to invite anyone home with me!" Your immediate response is to think that your brother sees you as a poor roommate, an inferior person. This makes you feel pretty bad.

Both of these examples demonstrate how the brothers in these situations are allowing these feelings to interfere with the communication process. The focus of the exchange is shifted from the negative feedback (message) to the personal feelings (emotional consequence).

Negative feedback can be a positive step toward solving the problem at hand; however, you must focus on the message being relayed, not on the anticipated emotional consequences of the exchange. Try taking the following steps when giving negative feedback.

1. **Describe the situation clearly**. Identify precisely the behavior that you would like to see changed. For example, Mark's brother does not pick up after himself, and Mark is left with the total responsibility for the care of the room. The target behavior is shared participation. While describing the situation, focus on present, not past behavior. Mark would probably like to say, "I clean the room, but you leave clothes and dishes and other articles lying around after using them. I end up spending more time cleaning up after you! You're old enough to participate. We had agreed on responsibilities. You do this all the time. I'm just a slave around here."

Such a statement, however, will get in the way of clearly stating what is going on now. What counts is that Mark is upset because his brother leaves a mess for him to clean up.

2. **Express your own feelings**. Two points to remember when expressing your feelings will keep the exchange from becoming an emotional battle. First, take responsibility for your emotions. Mark might say, "I feel frustrated and angry when you don't pick up your things." By using "I feel" messages, you don't accuse the other person of causing your response, and he or she is less likely to react defensively. You are simply stating how **you** feel. Second, share how you are feeling about the event **without** allowing the feedback process to act as an emotional release.
3. **Specify the changes that you would like to see occur**. Simply stating what you do not like does not guarantee that the other person will know what you want. It is appropriate to ask for a change in the other person's behavior, and the more specific you can be about this, the more likely it is that it will be understood. Avoid being demanding, as this indicates to the other person that he has no choice, causing his response to be of a defensive or aggressive nature. Simply state what you would like to have occur, such as: "I would like to request that you pick up after yourself and share the responsibility of our room."
4. **State what you perceive to be the possible consequences of a change in the other person's behavior**. Tell the other person what the outcomes will be if your request is granted. For example, Mark might say, "If you do your share of responsibilites in our room, Kevin, I will have some help and can bring my friends to our room without being embarrassed." The consequences, or outcomes, are best stated in positive terms, avoiding "you had better do it, or else ..." attitudes. Threatening the other person with punishment, while it may create temporary compliance, will not do much for consistent cooperation.

Use this model as a way to prepare to give the feedback: (**Person's Name**), I am feeling (**emotion**) about your (**current behavior**). I would like to (**propose behavior change**). If you can do this, I think (**perceived consequences**).

Using this model, write out what you believe Mark should say to Kevin.

Receiving Negative Feedback

So far, you have read primarily about how to give negative feedback. You also need to learn how to **receive** negative feedback. All of the same concepts apply. Your goal as the receiver of the feedback is to objectively focus on the message being sent in order to begin the resolving process.

When someone is critical of you, first use an active listening response: "You sound (**upset/angry**) with me about (**my forgetting/not picking up my things**)." If the other person responds that this is, indeed, the case, continue with what you perceive to be the problem. "It sounds like you would like me to (**pick up my things**). I think that is reasonable" (or unreasonable if that is the case). As with other skills, this technique is best learned by using it again and again. Use the model until you gain proficiency.

Imagine that you are Kevin in the previous scenario. In the space below, respond to the negative feedback given to you.

_____

_____

_____

Was your response something like this?

Kevin: "You sound upset with me for not picking up my things. It sounds like you would like me to do my share of the responsibilities we had agreed to. That's a reasonable request. I do enjoy our room when it is orderly. Also, I know we both find it easier to ask friends over on short notice when we keep with a system. I'm sorry about the extra work and embarassment I caused you yesterday afternoon. I'll try to do better."

Assertive Choice

Your parents want you to attend the college they went to, but you would rather go somewhere else. Which of the following are you likely to say?

a. "You always try to run my life. I'm tired of it!"
b. "I'll think about what you said, but I need to make my own decision."
c. "If that's what you want, I'll go, but I don't want to."

Would you rate your response as aggressive, assertive, or passive? Using the key on the next page, check your response.

Key: a = aggressive; b = assertive; and c = passive.

One of the most common sources of stress is not being able to tell someone else what you are feeling and thinking. An important reason to develop assertiveness skills is so that you may confidently confront situations that would typically produce anxiety, frustration, and guilt and would otherwise cause you to deny your own feelings and emotions. Assertiveness skills enable you to assert your rights without using intimidation or being intimidated. Assertiveness skills are necessary for managing the conflicts of everyday life.

There are times when you want to tell people how you feel, what you think is important, and what you can and can't do. You want to tell them that you have listened to them but that you cannot do what they want. You want to tell them what irritates or doesn't irritate you, how you work best or how you don't. And you want to do this in a way that is accepted by other people and that gets your point across effectively. It doesn't do you any good to yell or to have people guess what your needs are. They will likely guess wrong, and your needs as a result will not be met. It also doesn't do much good to hope that if you are nice to people they will somehow know what it is you need and give it to you. This doesn't work too well either.

Assertion is "owning" what you need, including your emotions, and not putting the responsibility for that ownership on someone else. Assertion is also talking about things in such a way that people will listen and not be offended, giving them the opportunity to respond in return. It is a manner that is direct, self-respecting, self-expressive, and straight forward.

You need to learn to assert what it is that you really want to say. Perhaps your best friend has learned that by shouting, pouting, ridiculing, and being intimidating she can get what she wants. Or, she may have learned that by being a sweet, likable "I'll-do-anything-you-want" type of person, she can get others to continuously respond to her in the way she wants. Whether she is overly passive or overly aggressive, the behavior is inappropriate. To be assertive means to value yourself — to act with confidence and speak with authority. Let's examine these characteristics.

The Passive Person. The passive person appears to be a calm, complacent individual who never makes waves and is always willing to do for others. The problem with this type of personality is that such persons are not being true to what they need, but rather are responding to the needs of others. Eventually, passive individuals will feel that they are not of value, that nothing they say has any effect. This often leads to anger, for when passive persons are denying themselves things, they are usually "keeping score" of all that they miss, and just when you least expect it they blow up. You've probably met such

individuals. When they finally react unfavorably to something you have said or done, they bring up incidents from weeks, months, and even years ago!

> Donna was asked by her friend Sue to purchase two dozen doughnuts for an upcoming breakfast meeting both girls were to attend, even though bringing the doughnuts was Sue's responsibility and not Donna's. Donna agreed to do it, even though she didn't want to. The following week, Sue asked Donna to pick up a book from the library for her. The next Tuesday Sue asked Donna to call a mutual friend with the message that Sue wouldn't be attending a friend's birthday party. With this, Donna finally exploded. "Why don't you do it? I'm sick of doing you favors. You've asked me for one favor too many!"

Sue was shocked at Donna's outburst. She had no idea that Donna was displeased with her. After all, she had never complained before, and in fact had seemed more than pleased to be of help. Passive individuals try very hard to control their anger, but the truth is that it usually controls them. The angrier they get, the more prone they are to explode. And when they do, the anger is usually blown out of proportion.

Dealing with the passive personality is not easy, because you never know when that person is being direct with you. Being passive may at times be necessary, but when it becomes a normal way of operating it can be damaging to relationships.

The Aggressive Person. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the aggressive person. These are the personality types who find it necessary to have an inordinate amount of control over themselves and everyone else. They may justify their tactless behavior by saying "Well, at least you know where I stand!" or "I just tell it like it is and let the chips fall where they may!" They achieve their goals at the expense of others. Aggressive persons want to be in control at all times and will do whatever is necessary to accomplish this. Being in control at all times implies taking the control from others, and this is just what they thrive on. As a result, the recipient of such a person's words or actions is often humiliated and usually hurt. No one likes dealing with the aggressive personality. As a result, the aggressive person is often shunned and avoided. No one likes to be bullied, and the aggressive person is not tolerated for long.

The Assertive Person. Returning to assertiveness: How do you know an assertive person when you see one? There are both nonverbal and verbal cues.

1. **Eye contact**. The assertive person uses direct eye contact. This doesn't mean staring someone down and not blinking, it means looking the other person in the eye and holding the contact fairly steadily throughout the conversation.

2. **Hand gestures**. Hand gestures are most effective when they help emphasize the content and importance of what you say. It does not of course, mean making wild gestures with the hands.

3. **Posture**. Posture can also indicate assertiveness: sitting or standing straight, not hunching over, and not hiding in the corner of a room.

4. **Voice**. Projecting one's voice, not yelling, but speaking up and not mumbling is being assertive. It is common to see people make assertive comments and then ruin the effect by either dropping or raising their voices at the end. For example, you might say to a friend in a firm voice, "I want you to be more truthful with me." This by itself sounds fine. However, if instead of waiting for a response you ask, "Okay?" you are destroying the assertiveness of your statement. Other phrases that can detract from assertiveness (particularly when delivered in a whiny voice) are those such as "You know?" or "You know what I mean?" Being assertive involves knowing when to stop talking.

5. **Owning Your Statements**. One hallmark of assertive behavior is the making of I statements, such as "I feel," "I like," "I wish," "I would appreciate," "I need." The passive person puts responsibility on someone else often finishing a statement by asking, "Don't you think so?"

Statements that affirm what you are feeling and what you need imply taking responsibility for your own decision making. The assertive person has control and has the choice to be more assertive or nonassertive in a given situation. Assertive choice gives you options.

Successful communication is that in which you are honest with yourself; you are direct and straightforward and in control of the situation without causing any one else undue pain. People respect honesty, even if it is criticism, if it is presented in a way that is understood. The table on page 36 shows a comparison of these alternative behavior styles in action.

Table 1.
Comparison of Alternative Behavior Styles

	Passive (Nonassertive)	Assertive	Aggressive
Characteristics	Allow others to choose for you. Indirect, self-denying, win-lose situation, which you lose. If you do get your own way, it is indirect.	Choose for self. Honest Direct, self-expressing,, straight-forward. Convert win-lose to win-win.	Choose for others. Tactless. Direct, self-enhancing. Self-expressive in derogatory manner. Win-lose situation, which you win.
Your own feelings in the exchange	Anxious, ignored, helpless, manipulated. Angry at self and/or other.	Confident, self-respecting, goal-oriented, valued. Accomplished.	Righteous, superior, controlling.
Others' feelings in the exchange	Guilty or superior. Frustrated with you.	Valued, respected.	Humiliated, defensive, resentful, hurt.
Others' view of you in the exchange	Lack of respect. Distrustful. May consider you a pushover. Do not know where you stand.	Respectful, trusting, know where you stand.	Vengeful, angry, distrustful, fearful.
Underlying belief system	I should never make anyone uncomfortable or displeased... except myself.	I have a responsibility to protect my own rights, and I respect others but not necessarily their behavior.	I have to put others down in order to protect myself.
Outcome	Others achieve their goals at your expense. Your rights are violated.	Outcome determined by negotiation. Your rights and others's rights respected.	You achieve your goal at others' expense. Your rights upheld; rights of others violated.

Your Communications

How good are you at communicating your needs? Do you let people know how you're feeling? Are you more often assertive, aggressive, or passive? Using the following situations for practice, write your responses to the questions:

1. A girl asks to cut in front of you in a line. You don't want to let her cut. What do you say? _____
2. Your brother/sister wants to watch a special TV program. He/she walks over to change the channel. What do you say? _____
3. A classmate asks to copy your answers to a test. You don't want him to. What do you say? _____
4. The teacher asks the entire class to stay after school because someone was talking. You don't want to take the blame for something you know isn't your fault. What do you do? _____
5. Your sister wants to borrow your favorite record to play at her friend's house. You're afraid the record will get scratched or broken because your sister is careless with her records. What can you say? _____

   _____
6. You are watching a TV movie scheduled to end in ten minutes. Your dad/mom comes in and says you must go to bed immediately. What could you say? _____
7. Your mother tells you that you have to babysit for your sister this afternoon. You have already made plans to go to the movies with friends. What do you say? _____
8. What can you say if another person is calling you names? _____

   _____
9. You don't understand a problem the teacher has just explained. What would you say in asking for help? _____

Being assertive is a method of communication that lets others know your ideas and feelings, while respecting their feelings as well. Now that you have learned what assertiveness is, how to acquire it, and when to use it, you are ready to share your knowledge with your friends and parents!

DEVELOPING THE ALL-IMPORTANT SELF-ESTEEM

You have no doubt heard others talk about self-esteem, but how much do you really know about your own self-esteem? In the space provided below, see if you can describe your self-esteem.

What I know about my self-esteem: _____

_____

_____

Did you find this exercise difficult to do? It is for most young adults. The picture you have of yourself is a key to your esteem. How you feel about yourself (your *self-concept*) is so important that it permeates your whole life. How you feel about yourself will affect your overall health, how well you learn, how you get along with friends, and how willing you will be to try new experiences. If the opinion you hold about yourself is unrealistic, if you feel that you are unworthy or unlovable, you may have difficulty in forming close relationships or may distance yourself from people and actually not allow the opportunity to feel worthy or to be loved now, or later in life. In this sense, the self concept is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Keeping your self-esteem healthy is one of the most important things you can do for yourself.

Your self-esteem is made up of the positive and/or negative thoughts and feelings you have about yourself. You might, for example believe any of the following about yourself:

Positive

- I'm attractive.
- I'm smart.
- I'm fit.
- I learn from my mistakes.
- I'm fun.
- I'm a good friend.

Negative

- I'm ugly.
- I'm stupid.
- I'm fat (skinny).
- I'm afraid to fail.
- I'm boring.
- No one likes me.

The more positive feelings you have about yourself the higher your self-esteem. Conversely, the more negative feelings you have about yourself, the lower your self-esteem. This does not mean that you should become conceited. Having a healthy esteem means that you value who you are and have an appreciation for what you are and what you do. It means that you *respect* yourself. One reason to learn more about the importance of self-concept is its contribution to your overall health and well-being. You must assume the responsibility for being in charge of its care. High self-esteem is so very important because it enables you to:

1. **Accept challanges**. When you have high self-esteem, you're not afraid to develop your abilities. You're willing to risk trying new things. If you don't try, you can't grow.
2. **Enrich your life**. Happy people are a joy to be around. By being happier with yourself, you'll be eager to join others in cooperative ventures, to share, to give of yourself. By being more comfortable and open about yourself, you'll develop closer relationships.
3. **Maintain self-confidence**. Believing you can do something is half the battle; it allows you to involve yourself completely with whatever you're doing. Whole-hearted effort helps to bring improvement to performance.
4. **Remain flexible**. Change isn't always easy. It's unfamiliar and frightening at times. However, a positive self-image makes it easier to accept new ideas and ways of doing things.

Some common effects of low self-esteem are:

1. **Lack of self-confidence**. Individuals with low self-esteem often have little confidence in their abilities. They may think they're doomed to fail again because they failed before.
2. **Poor performance**. Lack of self-confidence may result in making little or no effort toward realizing projects or goals. But failures that result from a lack of effort are not a true reflection of a person's abilities.
3. **Distorted view of self and others**. Some people won't give themselves credit for their accomplishments. These people may think others look better in comparison. They may also believe that things just happen to them, that they do not or can not control what happens.
4. **Unhappy personal life**. Negative people are not fun to be around. People with low self-esteem find it hard to develop close relationships. The result may be a lonesome and unhappy personal life.

The Self-Esteem Profile

Here's a profile to help you examine your self-esteem. Answer yes or no to the following questions. One thing to keep in mind is that most young people feel badly about themselves from time to time, so when answering these questions, think about how you feel **most** of the time.

1. Do you accept constructive criticism?
2. Are you at ease meeting new people?
3. Are you honest and open about your feelings?
4. Do you value your closest relationships?
5. Are you able to laugh at (and learn from) your own mistakes?
6. Do you notice and accept changes in yourself as they occur?
7. Do you look for and tackle new challenges?
8. Are you confident about your physical appearance?
9. Do you give yourself credit when credit is due?
10. Are you happy for others when they succeed?

If you answered most of these questions "yes," you probably have a healthy opinion of yourself.

1. Are you very shy or overly aggressive?
2. Do you try to hide your feelings from others?
3. Do you fear close relationships?
4. Do you try to blame your mistakes on others?
5. Do you find excuses for refusing to change?
6. Do you continually wish you could change your physical appearance?
7. Are you too modest about personal successes?
8. Are you glad when others fail?

If you answered "yes" to most of these questions, your self-esteem could probably use improvement. Whatever the level of your self-esteem now, you can take positive steps to improve it.

Here's how you can personally care for your self-concept.

1. **Acceptance**. Identify and accept strengths and weaknesses. Everyone has both.
2. **Encouragement**. Take a "can-do" attitude. Set a reasonable timetable for personal goals and accept encouragement along the way.
3. **Take pride in your achievements, both great and small**. Experiences are personal. We must each enjoy our own.
4. **Time**. Take time out regularly to be alone with your thoughts and feelings, to get involved in activities you can enjoy by yourself, like crafts, reading or an individual sport. Learn to enjoy your own company.
5. **Trust**. Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings; act on what you think is right. Doing what makes you feel happy and fulfilled will be a rewarding experience.
6. **Respect**. Value yourself, and don't try to be someone else. Be proud of who you are. Take the time to explore and appreciate your own special gifts and talents.
7. **Love**. Love yourself. This is done by accepting and learning from mistakes and not overreacting to errors, by accepting successes and failures of those who love you.

The Actual, Ideal, and Public Selves

The image you hold of yourself influencs your behavior and actions. But everyone views themselves differently in various situations. This is especially true for you, because of the many and rapid physical and emotional growth stages you undergo. Coming to terms with the constant changes between the "old" and the "emerging" self is an area that may cause extra stress for you.

You can sort out your thinking in categories of **actual**, **ideal**, and **public** "selves." The *actual self* is the opinion you hold of yourself. The *ideal self* is how you would like to be. The *public self* is the person you show to others — the image you project in public. "Putting up a good front," or projecting an acceptable image is something everyone does from time to time. When the discrepancies between public and private selves are too great however, the stress experienced can be enormous. When your actual and ideal selves are very different, you experience varying degrees of an inner stress that is then reflected in dealing with others.

The questions below are designed to help you determine how you see each of your selves. Read each one. Then in the spaces provided, write your response to each one.

1. How I would describe my *actual* self (my private opinion of me): _____

2. How I would describe my *ideal* self (how I would like to be): _____

3. How I would describe my *public* self (the "me" that I project in public): _____

- In what ways do your actual self and ideal self differ? _____
- How different are your public and private selves? _____
- In what ways does this cause stress for you? _____
- How might you go about bringing your selves closer together? (For example, you might change some of your irrational beliefs, or you might learn to become more assertive.) _____

Tender Loving Care

An important part of how we see ourselves and thus value ourselves comes from the abundance of love and affection we receive from the people that are important in our lives. The love that we receive from others (and give to others, as well) is an important ingredient in our health. This was demonstrated accidentally in a research project using rabbits as subjects. Although all were fed the same diet, it was discovered that some of the bunnies were in better health than the others. Initially the researchers couldn't

explain why this had happened. Then they discovered that a night lab worker had been playing with some of the bunnies, giving certain ones his attention and affection as he was cleaning the lab. Once they learned this, the researchers repeated the study, this time deliberately giving certain rabbits more attention and affection. Sure enough, the rabbits receiving the most attention again showed better overall health.

Numerous other studies show the powerful effect of *tender, loving care* "TLC" and its potential for contributing to overall wellness for humans. An important part of managing stress is being able to get your needs met. This includes your need for love and affection.

What do you do when you recognize that you need more love, care and attention from the important people in your life? Do you wait for demonstrations of affection, or have you learned appropriate ways to get your needs fulfilled? The following exercise will help you examine your needs and how you fulfill them.

Read the examples provided below, then record your feelings.

I need affection most when I:

- **have had my feelings hurt**
- **am not feeling well**
- **am not feeling particulary good about myself**
- **have excelled at a particular event and want to share my feelings of success**
- _____
- _____
- _____

When I need affection from others, I:

- **go to them and ask for affection**
- **pout until someone notices**
- **am extra kind and sensitive to others**
- _____
- _____
- _____

People of all ages need to be loved and nurtured. Don't be shy about telling others — particularly members of your family — that you care about

them. And remember, just as important as receiving love and affection is reaching out to show others you care and love them.

Sharing Positive Feelings

It is sad but true that people sometimes forget to share good feelings with one another. You can learn how to better share positive feelings with other people. Telling others that you have good feelings about them can contribute to their feelings of self-esteem. The following statements are designed to get you thinking about what makes **you** feel good. Identifying what makes you feel good will get you off to a good start in learning how to help draw out the good feelings in others.

1. Describe something that makes you feel good. _____

   _____

2. Describe something you did that made someone else happy. _____

   _____

3. Think of something someone said to you this week that made you feel good. What was it? _____

   _____

You can help others reduce stress by remembering to share positive feelings. Sometimes this is called *feedback*. For example, if you notice your sister or friend has a new haircut or is wearing her hair differently and it looks really good on her, you give her positive feedback when you say, "I really like the way you're wearing your hair. It looks great on you!" If you notice that she is in an especially good mood or is feeling excited about something you could say, "You look so happy!" Similarly, a big smile or a big hug can also be positive feedback. You are sharing good feelings when you do these things.

If you have positive feelings to give to someone, do it now! Take a few minutes now and list three things that you can do or say to make others feel good. Below are some statements to get you started.

I appreciate . . . . . .

I liked it when you . . . . . .

I missed you when . . . . . .

It was really helpful when you . . . . . .

When you . . . . I . . . . . .

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Developing Support Systems

Having a support system is invaluable because it provides human resources, people who can help you cope with the stressful and painful times. Likewise, when you share good times and positive experiences with others, their feedback can help you increase the positive feelings you have about yourself — again adding to your self-esteem.

Can you identify your support system? Your family and friends provide an obvious support system for you, but there are others who are a source of strength, too. In the exercise below, write down the names of those who provide a support system for you. Then see if you can determine how each one supports you, and ways support is shown. Here's an example:

WHO (Supporter): My Dad
WHAT (Demonstration of support): Yesterday when I forgot my lunch money my father brought it to me even though he had to leave work and drive to school.
HOW (How support is shown)? He wasn't angry and he didn't lecture me about being forgetful. He was concerned that I was without lunch.

By using this model, identify two of your supporters in the space provided below.

WHO (Supporter): _____

WHAT (Demonstration of support): _____

_____

HOW (How support is shown)? _____

_____

WHO (Supporter): _____

WHAT (Demonstration of support): _____

_____

HOW (How support is shown)? _____

_____

You've been reading about how you can help yourself cope with stress, but it is also important for you to learn how to help others cope in times of

stress. Just as you want others to be supportive of you, you can be supportive of others. Using the two hypothetical situations below, see if you can apply what you have just learned.

It is the ninth week of the school year when Jessica transfers to your school. She is dressed differently than the kids at school, and is obviously aware she doesn't fit in. She is shy and embarrassed to speak to other members of the class. See doesn't know her way around the building and hasn't been to her newly assigned locker. You can see she feels uncomfortable.

1. What could you do in this situation to help Jessica feel more comfortable? Name as many ways as possible to assist.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. How can you be supportive? _____

_____

3. What will you do to help? _____

_____

You are feeling pretty excited about the fact that you have very little homework tonight. You have decided to ask your parents if you could borrow the car for an early visit with friends. Your mother arrives home from work looking tired. She announces that she has much to do to prepare for an important meeting she is conducting tomorrow. Meanwhile your 8-year-old sister enters the room annoyed that dinner is not ready. She is frustrated with her homework assignment because she doesn't understand how to do it, and announces she isn't going to do it.

1. What could you do in this situation to help your mother and sister? Name as many ways as possible to assist.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. How can you be supportive?_____

_____

3. What will you do to help?_____

_____

Information about other kinds of support systems can be found in the section on "Getting Help."

TIME MANAGEMENT

One of the greatest pressures facing young people is that of managing time. There seems never to be enough time to cope with the work load of six or seven courses, the necessary time for family and friends, extra curricular activities, fitness activities, and private time for self. Having too much to do and not enough time to do it is stressful for most of us.

Setting Priorities

Learning to budget time is both possible and essential. A very important step in learning to manage time is getting organized and setting priorities. You may find it helpful to set up a daily or weekly "To Do List." It should not be a long and detailed list, but should contain those things you want to accomplish each day (or week). Delineate the four to six tasks that are the most important, then prioritize them, listing the most important first and so on. Set a timetable and estimate the length of time necessary to perform each task. You may also wish to include the name of anyone you wish to ask for help. (For example, if you and your brother rotate nights on the computer, and you are almost certain you will want to use it to make last minute corrections on your project the evening prior to turning it in, then you may wish to ask your brother to trade that day in advance.)

The weekly chart shown below has proven helpful for many young people:

TO BE DONE THIS WEEK		
TASKS	DATE DUE	WHOM WILL I ASK FOR HELP IF NEEDED
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Here's a way of planning your day-to-day activities.

Daily Planning Sheet

Today's Date: _____

Schedule _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Special Projects:

What: _____

Due: _____

Special Materials To Get _____

People to Ask for Help _____

Phone Calls to Make:

(Person) _____ (Phone #) _____

(Person) _____ (Phone #) _____

Letters to Write: _____

Don't forget to _____

_____

Goal Setting

Another aspect of managing time is that of goal setting. A goal is a priority we want to achieve. Setting goals is one thing, reaching your goals is another. Accomplishing your goals will require specific actions on your part. Actualizing goals is best accomplished by using a systematic guide that if followed, can spell the difference between success and mere wishful thinking. As you design your working paper of your goals, keep these measures in mind:

- select goals for the right reason
- put your goals in writing
- be specific in your goals
- recognize incompatible goals
- revise your goals periodically
- follow a time line and set target dates
- keep a copy of your goal plan in sight and refer to it often
- while approaching the completion of a major goal, begin formulating another

Let's examine each of these closer.

1. **Select your goals for the right reason**. There are many reasons why you might chose a goal. You may want to copy an idea of a good friend or someone you admire, or perhaps someone else has convinced you that a certain goal is a good idea, when in fact it may not be right for you. Evaluate your goals carefully, making sure they are right for you. (If you are uncertain if this decision is right for you, ask your parents or others whom you trust and in whom you can confide.) If a goal is set by you and selected for the right reason, that is, something you really want to achieve, then the chances for success are greatly improved. Asking the following questions might prove useful. Do I really want to achieve this goal? How will achieving this goal benefit me? How will I measure the success of the goal? How important is its achievement to me? What price will I have to pay to achieve it? Am I willing to pay the price? Will I commit the time and energy necessary to complete the goal?
2. **Put your goals in writing**. This is important because it helps you clearly identify what you want and it increases your personal commitment to it. Everyone can cite past instances when their undocumented ideals and goals were unrealized, simply lost in the shuffle of other good intentions. If a goal is important, then documenting it helps to make a personal commitment to seeing it through to completion. It also gives you an opportunity to devise a time line of the necessary steps to follow in order to realize your goal. Estimate where you are now and where you would like to be, and plan the steps in between.
3. **Be specific in your goals**. Attainable goals are personal decisions and require dedication and commitment. Goals that are specific, as opposed to ambiguous, help you clarify the needed direction. Also, you will be less likely to lose interest in achieving it. For example, rather than saying,

"I want a good job," clarify this desire. Ask, what kind of job, indoors or outdoors? What kind of income do I want, weekly or monthly salary? What skills are required, formal, trade, vocational education? How much time and money am I willing to spend to acquire this job? Answers to these questions provide more direction than simply stating you want good job. Rather than saying, "I want more money," say, "I need an additional income of at least $120 a month."

Commit to writing, as clearly as you can, what is it you want and what is necessary to realize it. This can save you an enormous amount of time and effort and, needless to say, provides a plan.

4. **Recognize incompatible goals**. Sometime your goals will compete with one another. When this happens, the attainment of one prevents the achievement of another. Let's say for example that you want to excel in tennis and golf, but you simply do not have enough leisure time to practice both. Incompatibility can lead to postponement of both goals. Worse yet, having incompatible goals can lead you to put your efforts into several projects, achieving excellence in none. Therefore, it is important to recognize goals that are not compatible in order to decide on the major goal — the one with the best pay-off. This will help you avoid a lot of wasted effort.

5. **Revise your goals periodically**. It is reasonable to expect that what you want to do and achieve will change from time to time. This doesn't mean that you will abandon goals for no reason at all. It means if another more important goal takes its place, or if your plans change significantly, the new goal may be given priority.

6. **Follow a time line and set target dates**. In order to be a goal, there must be both an outlined direction and a deadline for accomplishment. Without these, goals are no more than daydreams. Breaking a goal into subgoals and listing the activities necessary to achieve them can be very helpful. Here is an example:

Major goal: Go to College
Subgoals:
May to October: Look at various college programs
November: Write for application and necessary information
February 15: Deadline for application
March: Apply for scholarships
June: Begin summer school course work (complete 6 units of credit)
Semester one: complete 15 units
Semester two: complete 18 units

Subgoals can be made even more manageable by breaking them into monthly or weekly activities.

Subgoals also should have deadlines that are realistic and allow time for errors and unforeseen circumstances. Establishing deadlines is fundamental to increasing your own motivation to achieve the subgoals. Just as important, achieving subgoals creates the satisfaction and momentum that will motivate you to achieve your major goal.

7. **Keep a copy of your goal plan in sight and refer to it often**. This helps you avoid falling into the "endless activity trap." If you are constantly aware of what your major goal is, you reduce the odds of losing sight of it is as you proceed with the whirlwind of daily activities.
8. **While approaching the completion of a major goal, begin formulating another important goal**. After you achieve a goal, allow enough time to enjoy its rewards. Then, in due time, set out in pursuit of the next one.

Keeping these suggestions in mind, design for yourself a working paper — a plan for looking at your goals systematically. (This should be updated yearly.) Ideally, your goals should be comprehensive enough to develop all areas of your life. Your paper should include plans for job or career satisfaction, learning and education, personal relationships, leisure satisfaction, status and respect, spiritual growth, and any other goals you want to pursue that may not fit into the previous categories.

A comprehensive working paper includes your subgoals. The specific subgoals you set up and accomplish in the short run usually turn out to be the building blocks on which major goals are achieved. All in all, success will depend on how closely your achievements match your plan.

What goals have you set for yourself? Using the following guideline, record your goals in each of the areas below.

My goals for (year?)

JOB OR CAREER SATISFACTION (Goals for your job or career)

1. _____

2. _____

LEARNING AND EDUCATION (What would you like to know more about? Which skills do you want to develop? To what formal education do you aspire?)

1. _____

2. _____

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (Goals in your relationships with parents, friends, others.)

1. _____

2. _____

LEISURE SATISFACTION (Goals for your leisure time and activities: hobbies, sports. Interests you want to develop.)

1. _____

2. _____

STATUS AND RESPECT (To which groups do you want to belong? What are your goals with respect to these groups? To what extent do you want to be respected by others? From whom do you want respect?)

1. _____

2. _____

SPIRITUAL GROWTH (Goals for peace of mind, your search for meaning.)

1. _____

2. _____

OTHERS
(Goals that may not fit into the other categories.)

1. _____

2. _____

Hurdles/Helps

After you have defined each goal and have planned how to achieve it, examine what can prevent you from achieving each goal (A and B), or what you can do to achieve each goal (C and D). Work through A, B, C and D for each goal.

A. Personal shortcomings to overcome:

_____

_____

B. Obstacles to overcome:

_____

_____

C. Actions I need to take to achieve my goal:

_____

_____

D. Help and support I will need to solicit from others:

_____

_____

Plan:

What specific things can I do to move myself toward this goal? _____

_____

_____

Reward:

Upon completing this goal, my reward will be: _____

_____

MANAGING MUSIC AND OTHER SOUNDS

Have you ever listened to a music selection that made you feel happy and exuberant, while another selection made you feel sad and depressed? That's because sounds exert a powerful influence over the way you feel.

The work of numerous researchers has proven that whether you hear a sound consciously or unconsciously, your body hears the vibration and responds to it at the cellular level. While some sounds can keep you well and "in tune" with yourself, others can make you literally ill. The research of Dr. Sheldon Deal, a nationally known chiropractor and author, produced evidence that loud and harsh sounds have a definite weakening effect on muscle strength. Over 90% of persons tested on the electronic strain gauge (an instrument designed to measure the effect of noise on muscle strength) while listening to loud and harsh sounds register an instant loss of two thirds of their normal muscle strength.

What implications do these findings have for young adults who listen to music (much of it loud) incessantly? Because sound does influence your mood state, it is not a good idea for you to wake up to harsh sounds early in the morning or to play them last thing at night. Instead, try this in the morning: when you begin preparation for the day, put on a music selection that will set the tone for a positive and upbeat mood. Notice your mood when you have listened to 20 minutes of a upbeat sound first thing in the morning. Try it for five mornings and notice how you feel. Record your responses each day. Use the chart below.

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

In the evening, when preparing for bed, put on a soothing relaxing music. Just as you used music to enhance your wakeful state and influence it in a positive and constructive way, the goal now is to bring the body and mind to total relaxation and prepare it for deep sleep. Again, record your responses each day.

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

How does this feel? Do you notice how rested you feel when the body has been lulled to sleep by soothing music?

Just as harsh music can have a negative effect on your mood, various other unwanted sounds can close in on you, making you irritable, frustrated and tense. You may not understand why you are in such a bad mood, and thus become even more frustrated. The cycle feeds upon itself, making you less able to deal with other stresses in your life. You want to do your best to identify what sounds are closing in on you and making you tense. You can do this by keeping a log. This log, or "noise journal," will help you in two ways. You will be able to identify the exact noise that is really bothering you and you will be able to recognize how the noise makes you feel, whether you are overreacting to it, and how to develop coping skills. Identifying the exact noise is the first step toward eliminating or reducing that noise. The following format is a simple one you may want to use to get started.

Nature of Sound _____

Time of Occurrence _____

Frequency _____

My Feelings _____

Coping Mechanisms _____

Here's how 16-year-old Marcy used this log.

Marcy spent the morning shouting at her sister, bursting into tears when her mother told her to clean her room, and snapping at her friends on the telephone. At the suggestion of her mother, Marcy sat down and wrote in her NOISE JOURNAL. It reads as follows.

NATURE OF SOUND: My baby brother George keeps screaming and screaming. It seems as if he is never going to stop!

TIME OF OCCURRENCE: George has been crying all morning. I think he is teething. He has cried every morning this week. He has the room right next to mine and wakes me up every morning.

FREQUENCY: Constantly. George never seems to shut up. I can't even have telephone conversations with my friends because of his noise.

MY FEELINGS: I'm mad at George. I know he can't help crying, but I wish he'd stop. I'm mad at my mother too for letting him cry. Why doesn't she do something to make him shut up? If I cry, she makes me stop right away.

COPING MECHANISMS: I could leave the house, take a walk or go ride my bike just to get away. I could tell mom how much I hate that crying and ask her to do something. Maybe I could sleep in my sister's room or on the couch so that I wouldn't be woken up each morning by George's crying. Maybe I could take a little more time to talk to him and soothe him. I do think he's hurting.

This procedure will move both Marcy and her mother toward a constructive approach in reducing the anxiety and to increasing personal well-being. You might want to observe how the sounds in your home affect each member of your household. Does your favorite record album have much the same effect on your parents as Marcy's teething brother had on her? If so, what can you do about it? You can do your part. Show empathy concerning the effects of your loud stereo on family members, and show consideration in respecting the rights of others in your home environment.

SCHOOL STRESS

Quick: Here'a quiz for you. What looks like a job, feels like a job, and takes its toll on you like a job? What demands 7 or 8 hours a day of intense concentration, 5 days a week? What has people in positions of power overlooking your performance? Did you say "school?" Well, sort of. The best answer is your "job." Either way, school or job, you may be suffering from school stress.

The school experience can and does represent a great many of the stressors you encounter. That's because school takes up a large portion of your time in the first 20 years of your life. The average student spends approximately 15,000 hours in an educational environment from kindergarten through 12th grade. In the end, you will be a 13-year veteran of the school experience. Then, possibly off to college for more!

The School Stress Profile

The following Stress Profile is designed to help you understand, on a self-evaluative basis, the areas and frequency of school stress. After you have completed all 49 items, transfer the scores to the scoring profile. If you need additional help in interpreting the score, ask for help. You may wish to discuss the results of the profile with your parents or teachers.

Stress Profile for Students

Directions: Check one box for each item. 1st box = never; 2nd box = sometimes; 3rd box = frequently.

	NEVER	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY
INTERPERSONAL			
1. When in school, I like to be my myself.	☐	☐	☐
2. Peers do not include me in their activities.	☐	☐	☐
3. I worry about what other students are thinking about me.	☐	☐	☐
4. I frequently tell other students what to do.	☐	☐	☐
5. I am easily influenced by peers.	☐	☐	☐
6. I like to be the leader of the group.	☐	☐	☐
7. I like my school friends.	☐	☐	☐
Total Items 1-7	_____		
SELF-CONCEPT			
8. I feel other students do not like me.	☐	☐	☐
9. I worry about what my family thinks about me as a student.	☐	☐	☐
10. It bothers me to back out of a possible fight with other students.	☐	☐	☐
11. I see myself as a 'loner' in the school environment.	☐	☐	☐
12. I do not feel good about myself in school.	☐	☐	☐
13. Other students act friendly toward me.	☐	☐	☐
14. Other students would describe me as 'calm, cool, and collected.	☐	☐	☐
Total Items 8-14	_____		
SELF-CONTROL			
15. I feel I can't control what happens to me.	☐	☐	☐
16. I let other students tell me what to do.	☐	☐	☐
17. When I do something wrong in school, there is very little I can do to change it.	☐	☐	☐
18. In school, I am blamed for things that are not my fault.	☐	☐	☐
19. When another student is angry with me, there is little I can do to change his or her mind.	☐	☐	☐
20. I let other students take charge of things.	☐	☐	☐
21. If there is a fight, I feel like I want to join in.	☐	☐	☐
Total Items 15-21	_____		

	NEVER	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY
COPING SKILLS			
22. In school, I often lose control of myself.	☐	☐	☐
23. If I see a fight at school, I feel threatened, scared, or frightened.	☐	☐	☐
24. I get upset when I see fighting in school.	☐	☐	☐
25. In school, I often am so angry I feel like hitting someone.	☐	☐	☐
26. If someone is angry with me, I can avoid getting into a fight by working it out with them.	☐	☐	☐
27. When I get angry in school, it's usually for a reason I can understand.	☐	☐	☐
28. When there is a problem, I feel like letting other students decide what to do.	☐	☐	☐
Total Items 22-28 _____			
PROBLEM-SOLVING			
29. I have trouble solving my school-related problems.	☐	☐	☐
30. I try to get my own way.	☐	☐	☐
31. I get upset/angry when things go wrong.	☐	☐	☐
32. I can't tell friends how I feel about things.	☐	☐	☐
33. I try to avoid facing school problems.	☐	☐	☐
34. I need a friend to help with my problems.	☐	☐	☐
35. I don't think planning ahead makes things turn out better.	☐	☐	☐
Total Items 29-35 _____			
SCHOOL			
36. I worry about school things.	☐	☐	☐
37. I feel nervous at school.	☐	☐	☐
38. I wish I did not have to go to school.	☐	☐	☐
39. I have trouble doing my school work.	☐	☐	☐
40. I am not interested in school work.	☐	☐	☐
41. I do not have good friends at school.	☐	☐	☐
42. When I am in school, I wish I were some place else.	☐	☐	☐
Total Items 36-42 _____			
PHYSICAL/BEHAVIORAL SIGNS OF STRESS			
43. I feel upset at school.	☐	☐	☐
44. I feel I can't find time to relax or rest.	☐	☐	☐
45. I feel I can't stay still.	☐	☐	☐

	NEVER	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY
46. I get sad or depressed.	☐	☐	☐
47. I get stomach aches or headaches.	☐	☐	☐
48. I find myself overloaded with too much to do.	☐	☐	☐
49. I have trouble sleeping at night.	☐	☐	☐

Total Items 43-49 _____

Instructions for Scoring

1. After you have completed items 1–49, total the scores in each section and enter it in the corresponding lines on this page.
2. Plot your score on the dotted line with an "X" and draw a line between your scoring "X's" so that a clear profile of your stress evaluation is visible.
3. Add up all your category scores and enter the number in the box after Total Overall Score. If you divide the total score by 7, you will find your average score for the total test, and this should be entered at the bottom of the scoring chart.
4. Check your level on the same line as either low, moderate, or high.

STRESS

	SCORE	LOW				MODERATE							HIGH			
		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Interpersonal	_____	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Self-concept	_____	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Self-control	_____	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Coping skills	_____	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Problem solving	_____	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
School	_____	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Physical/Behavioral Signs of Stress	_____	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
TOTAL OVERALL SCORE	_____	LOW				MODERATE							HIGH			
AVERAGE SCORE	_____															

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Working Smarter, Not Harder

Why is being a student so stressful? Because learning can be hard work. There is a way to think about your 13 years of school career that will help you see that in a sense, you have a "career" just as your parents do.

Being a student is your **job** (occupation), learning is your **role**, education is your **career**, and the school is your **organization**. Together these facets make up your "world of work." Have your parents ever said to you, "How was your (school) day?" and you replied "Fine." Not knowing what it entailed, you both let it go at that. Right? Take the time to discuss the dimensions of your school world, especially with your parents. You will be surprised to find out how much your school day has in common with your parents' world of work.

There are some things you can do to make your work-world (school) more manageable. Many have already been discussed in this book, like time management and setting priorities.

Here are some additional tips:

1. **Organize your work environment**. You will need to create a quiet study area, safe from interruption, equipped with a good light. During study time there should be no TV or stereo (unless the radio background music is a subtle one without lyrics since music with lyrics will cause you to lose concentration), and no major interruptions. Discourage lengthy phone calls during study time. When a friend calls and you can see this is heading up to be a long conversation say, "John, can I call you when I complete my homework? I'll need about 45 minutes. Does that work for you?" The shorter you keep phone calls during study time, the more helpful it will be to keep concentration on the task of homework completion. Ideally your room should be equipped with a bookcase, desk, and file. A large month-at-glance wall calendar is helpful to log in social activities, special events, exams, due dates for projects, and so on.
2. **Identify your workstyle.** While some students complete all their studying and homework in a single session, others do better if they study for 20 minutes, take a break, and then come back to it. The important thing is that you recognize your own style of doing productive work. We all have a preferred work style, an optimum pattern for producing our best work. You can better learn your work style by noticing the rituals that you go through before you are ready for productive work, for example, organizing your desk, sharpening all your pencils (even those you don't use), phoning your friend to check on an assignment, and so on.
3. **Determine what on-the-job skills you will need**. Use clues from report cards, teacher conferences, and aptitude tests to get a better idea of your

academic strengths and weaknesses. If you are lacking a particular skill that is holding you back from current work, rather than avoiding it or refusing to accept the challenge by doing subpar work, muster the courage to get help. Not all subjects come easy for students and just about everyone has a subject area that seems more difficult than the others. By recognizing and confronting the subject area that is more difficult for you, you can then seek special help. Ask for extra help, devote additional study time to the area, and if you still find that this area causes undue stress and frustration for you, ask your parents and teachers if they can recommend special tutoring.

If you have any special physical problems that you feel might handicap you, such as special problems with eyesight, hearing, or health in general, discuss them with your parents or teachers. Together you could arrange to solve the problems or strengthen weaknesses.

4. **Do your homework judiciously**. Keeping up, rather than catching up, prevents you from feeling overwhelmed when homework and studying pile up. Break large tasks into smaller ones. If you have to write a report, schedule the research for one weekend and the writing for the next weekend. Instead of cramming the night before, study for a big test over two or three days.

5. **Show an active interest**. Your attitude toward school really is half the battle. If school is generally difficult for you, then of course you may feel overwhelmed. If you can decide, however, that the purpose of the school years is to prepare you for living and functioning in a bigger (and exciting) world in the very near future, then you are one step closer to making the school years work for you. There are a great number of skills you can learn in school. Think of going to school as a large shopping spree. Did you know, for example, that by the time you graduate from the school's curriculum, you could speak and write two foreign languages; gain proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking skills; learn enough about your car to keep it in good working order; acquire enough skills to build your home; learn how to function and care for relationships; learn the art of photography; and, know enough about your talents and aptitudes to decide on the best possible career choices. Of course, there are others. The point is, if you think of school as a real "drag" and a boring place to be (and yes, it is hard work), you may miss the opportunity to make the time you spend in school of real value.

RELAXATION

Imagine what a person who is angry or tense looks like. You can see the stress in the face, the muscles and the posture. When your muscles are tense, they reflect your state of mind. When your breathing is rapid and out of control, your emotions are also out of control.

When you relax, you become aware of the relationship between your mind and body. When you relax your body, you relax your state of mind. You calm down. Conscious relaxation produces changes in the electrical activity of the brain and in turn produces more alpha waves, which are associated with feelings of well-being. There is also a decrease in the rate of metabolism and oxygen consumption, even more than during sleep. Conscious relaxation is a simple but very effective method of eliminating tension. With regular practice you can learn to release the charge of tension in your muscles and acquire more energy.

Everyone needs more than just encouragement to relax. Having various muscles constantly tense as you wrinkle your forehead, squint your eyes, tap your fingers, and shift position is a sign that energy is being wasted. Learning and practicing relaxation is a way to be selectively tense when a particular task must be performed so you can avoid wasting energy and can accomplish more. Baseball player Steve Garvey may get up slowly, walk slowly to the batting mound, and become alert and tense while waiting for a pitch. If he is unsuccessful at connecting with the ball, he may back off from the batter's box then approach it again with a cautious sluggishness. A minute later, he may be running at full speed toward first base. He does not run around on the field while waiting for his turn at bat, nor does he jump up and down while waiting for the next pitch. Why? He saves his energies for those things that are purposeful to the event. This is a worthwhile practice. People who learn to relax do not lose motivation or become sluggish, nor do they become lazy, bored, or tired. In fact, just the opposite occurs: by using progressive muscle relaxation, they can remain alert and avoid fatigue.

It's easy to tell someone else to relax, but it can certainly be hard to learn to do so yourself. Relaxation is a skill that everyone must possess in order to survive the stresses of daily life. You can learn to relax by practicing the principles of progressive relaxation.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique that uses physical exercise to achieve relaxation from tension. It is a proven, systematic way to control

muscle tension. In addition to helping people to relax, the technique has been used for alleviating a number of disorders including anxiety, insomnia, headaches, backaches, and hypertension. The state of physical relaxation produced is pleasant and allows one to feel rested and refreshed.

This technique is called progressive because each muscle group is tensed and relaxed individually, slowly progressing throughout the body. Tensing and relaxing the muscles helps you to increase your awareness of the body's muscular response to stress. As you become more aware of the location and feeling of muscle tension, the absence of tension becomes clear. You begin to recognize muscle tension and the difference between being tense and being relaxed. The muscle groups around the head, face, neck, and shoulders are particularly important areas of stress, and a great deal of tension may accumulate in these muscles.

Try the following exercise. Focus on the last time you were angry and tense. Now stand in front of the mirror and think about that incident. Are your legs in a defensive stance? Is your jaw tight? Do your eyes seem intense? During the next few days, observe how you sit and stand in different places and at different times. Notice which of your muscles seem to stay tense long after the stressful event. Often when you are nervous, angry, afraid, or hurried, your muscles will get tense or tight.

The next exercise will teach you to feel the difference between tense and relaxed muscles and will help you learn to condition all of your muscles in order to achieve a state of relaxation. To prepare, first find a quiet location free of interruptions. Dim the lights. You may practice this exercise while reclining on a sofa, lying on a bed, or sitting in a comfortable chair (preferably one that reclines). It is easier to learn the exercise the first time while reclining. Later it will be beneficial to practice while sitting up or standing. Clothing should be comfortable and loose. It is best to remove shoes, eyeglasses, or contact lenses. This exercise is most effective if you follow the word-by-word script provided below. To practice, close your eyes and relax while the instructions are read to you. (Another way to do this is to record the script yourself so that it is available for use at any time.)

The word-by-word script.

[For Total Body Tension] "First, tense every muscle in your body. Tense the muscles of your jaw, eyes, arms, hands, chest, back, stomach, legs, and feet. Feel the tension all over your body. . . .Hold the tension briefly, and then relax and let go as you breathe out. . . .Let your whole body relax. . . Feel a wave of calm come over you as you stop tensing.

"Take another deep breath. . .Study the tension as you hold your breath. Slowly breathe out and relax and let go. Feel the deepening relaxation.

Allow yourself to drift more and more with this relaxation. . . .As you continue, you will exercise different parts of your body. Become aware of your body and its tension and relaxation. This will help you to become deeply relaxed.

[Head and Face.] Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, wrinkle up your forehead. Do you feel the tension? Your forehead is very tight. Briefly pause and be aware of it. . . Now relax and let go. Feel the tension slipping out. Relax your forehead and take a deep breath. Hold it briefly. Breathe out, and relax.

"Squint your eyes. Keep the rest of your body relaxed. Feel the tension around your eyes. Take a deep breath and hold it. Breathe out, and relax.

"Open your mouth as wide as you can. Feel the tension in your jaw and chin. Briefly hold the tension. Now let your mouth gently close. Take a deep breath. Hold it. As you breathe out, relax and let go.

"Close your mouth. Push your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Study the tension in your mouth and chin. Briefly hold the tension. . . .Relax. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Now relax and let go as you breathe out. When you breathe out, let your tongue rest comfortably in your mouth, and let your lips be slightly apart.

"Keep the rest of your body relaxed but clench your jaw tightly. Feel the tension in your jaw muscles. Briefly hold the tension . . . Now relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Again, relax and let go as you breathe out.

"Think about the top of your head, your forehead, eyes, jaws, and cheeks. Make sure these muscles are relaxed. . . .Have you let go of all the tension? Continue to let the tension slip away and feel the relaxation replace the tension. Feel your face becoming very smooth and soft as all the tension slips away . . . .Your eyes are relaxed. . . .Your tongue is relaxed. Your jaws are loose and limp. . . .All of your neck muscles are also very, very relaxed.

"All of the muscles of your face and head are relaxing more and more . . . Your head feels as though it could roll from side to side.

[Shoulder.] Now shrug your shoulders up and try to touch your ears with your shoulders. Feel the tension in the shoulders and neck. Hold the tension...

Now, relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out.

"Notice the difference how the tension is giving way to relaxation. Shrug your right shoulder up and try to touch your right ear. Feel the tension in your right shoulder and along the right side of your neck. Hold the tension . . . Now, relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out.

"Next, shrug your left shoulder up and try to touch your left ear. Feel the tension in your left shoulder and along the left side of your neck. Hold the tension. Now, relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out. Feel the relaxation seeping into the shoulders. As you continue, you will become loose, limp, and as relaxed as a sandbag.

[Arms and Hands.] Stretch your arms out and make your hands into fists. Feel the tension in your hands and forearms. Hold the tension. Hold, relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out.

"Push your right hand down into the surface it is resting on. Feel the tension in your arm and shoulder. Hold the tension . . . . Now relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let as you slowly breathe out.

"Next, push your left hand down into whatever it is resting on. Feel the tension in your arm and shoulder. Hold the tension . . . . Now relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out.

"Bend your arms toward your shoulders and double them up as you would do to show off your muscles. Feel the tension. Hold the tension . . . Now relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out.

[Chest and Lungs.] Move on to the relaxation of your chest. Begin by taking a deep breath that totally fills your lungs. As you hold your breath, notice the tension. Be aware of the tension around your ribs. . . . Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out. Feel the deepening relaxation as you continue breathing easily, freely, and gently.

"Take in another deep breath. Hold it and again feel the contrast between tension and relaxation. As you do, tighten your chest muscles. Hold the tension. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out. Feel the relief as you breathe out and continue to breathe gently. Breathe as smoothly as you can. You will become more and more relaxed with every breath.

[Back.] "Keep your face, neck, arms, and chest as relaxed as possible. Arch your back up (or forward, if you are sitting). Arch it as though you had a pillow under the middle and lower parts of your back. Observe the tension along both sides of your back. Briefly hold that position. Now relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you breathe out. Let that relaxation spread deep into your shoulders and down into your back muscles.

"Feel the slow relaxation developing and spreading all over. Feel it going deeper and deeper. Allow your entire body to relax. Face and head relaxed... Neck relaxed. . . Shoulders relaxed. . . Arms relaxed. . . Chest relaxed. . . Back relaxed. . . All these areas are relaxing more and more, becoming more deeply relaxed.

[Stomach.] "Now begin the relaxation of the stomach area. Tighten up this area. Briefly hold the tension. . . .Relax and let go. Feel the relaxation pour into your stomach area. All the tension is being replaced with relaxation. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out.

"Now experience a different type of tension in the stomach area. Push your stomach out as far as you can. Briefly hold the tension. . . Now relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out. Now pull your stomach in. Try to pull your stomach in and touch your backbone. Hold it. . . Now relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you breathe out.

"You are becoming more and more relaxed. Each time you breathe out, feel the gentle relaxation in your lungs and in your body.

[Hips, Legs, and Feet.] "Begin the relaxation of your hips and legs. Tighten your hips and legs by pressing down the heels of your feet into the surface they are resting on. Tighten these muscles. Keep the rest of your body as relaxed as you can and press your heels down . . . Now, hold the tension. . . Relax and let go. Your legs feel as if they could float up. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out. Feel the relaxation pouring in.

"Next, tighten your lower leg muscles. Feel the tension. Briefly hold the tension . . . Now relax and let go. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you breathe out.

"Now, curl your toes downward. Curl them down and try to touch the bottom of your feet with your toes. Hold them and feel the tension. . . Relax and let go. Wiggle your toes gently as you let go of the tension. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you breathe out.

"Bend your toes back the other way. Bend your toes right up toward your knees. Feel the tension. Feel the tension. Hold the tension . . . . Relax and let go. Feel all the tension vanish. Take a deep breath. Hold it. Relax and let go as you slowly breathe out. Feel the tension leaving your body and the relaxation seeping in.

"You have progressed through all the major muscles of your body. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation. Now, let them become more and more relaxed. Continue to feel yourself becoming more and more relaxed each time you breathe out. Your whole body is becoming more and more relaxed with each breath. Enjoy the relaxation.

"Spend a few more minutes relaxing if you like. If you find yourself getting upset about something during the day, remember the relaxation you have just experienced. Before getting upset, take a deep breath, hold it, and as you slowly breathe out silently say, "Relax and let go." With practice, you will be able to use this technique to relax whenever you begin to feel the stress."

It is important to include an ending process at the end of the relaxation exercise. This process consists of flexing the arms, taking a deep breath, and slowly opening the eyes. This helps the system adjust gradually to the higher state of arousal needed for getting up and walking around. You might say in the script, "Now flex your arms. Take a deep breath and release it slowly. I'm now going to count from four to one. When I reach one, your eyes will open and you will be awake, feeling calm and comfortable. Four...three... two...one. Open your eyes, feeling calm and comfortable." (The count is done slowly, allowing the relaxation period to be ended easily and quietly. Since the relaxation state is similar to a sleep state, the final steps allow a better transition to the alert phase.)

Use this or one of the following relaxation techniques at least three times each week, more often if possible. A good time to do so is at times when you might typically need to relax. For instance, you might need it to unwind after a long tense day, or to calm down before going to bed on an evening when you are feeling particularly excited or keyed up. Make a point of taking time out to relax. Notice how you feel afterward. During the first 2 weeks of practicing this skill, check for signs that your body is giving you indicating you are tense. To look for cues that your body is tensing up, ask yourself these questions: Is my forehead wrinkled? Are my jaw muscles tight? Is my stomach knotted up? Are my fists clenched? Use the relaxation to replace tension. Tensing and relaxing muscles helps you to increase your awareness of your body's muscular response to stress. As you become more aware of the location and feeling of muscle tension, the absence of tension becomes clearer.

Relaxing With Music

You can also use soothing music with the relaxation techniques found in this section of this book. Put on a tape or record with relaxing, comforting sounds. As the music plays, take note of what is happening to your body and mind as they grow calm and relaxed. Notice how the body and mind react to different kinds of music. The National Music Association (NMA) has compiled a catalogue listing highly relaxing and meditative soothing music to bring about body and muscular relaxation. This list can be found in most major music stores. Relaxing with music is using sound in a positive, health-promoting way.

Autohypnosis

You can also counteract tension with *autohypnosis*. The steps to this simple technique are as follows.

1. Sit comfortably in a chair facing a wall about 8 feet away. Pick a spot or an object on the wall that is about 1 foot above eye level when you are seated. This is your focal point.

2. Look at your focal point and begin counting backward from 100, with one number for each breath you exhale.

3. As you count and continue to concentrate on your focal point, imagine yourself floating down through the chair, very relaxed.

4. As you stare at your focal point you will find that your eyelids feel heavier and that you begin to blink. When this happens, let your eyes slowly close.

5. While your eyes are closed, continue to count backward one number for each time you exhale. As you count, imagine how it would feel to be as limp as a sandbag, totally relaxed and floating in a safe, comfortable space. This is your space.

6. As that safe, comfortable feeling flows over you, stop counting, relax, and just float in your space.

7. If any disturbing thought enters your space, just let it flow out again; continue to feel safe and relaxed.

8. When you are ready to come out of autohypnosis, either let yourself drift off to sleep or count from one to three and exhale,using the following steps: at one, let yourself get ready; at two, take a deep breath and hold it for a few seconds; and at three; exhale and open your eyes slowly. As you open your eyes, continue to hold on to that relaxed, comfortable feeling.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Controlling one's breathing is often an effective way to relax. When you take in air, your diaphragm expands and tenses. As you let the air out, or exhale, it relaxes. So one way to relax is to lengthen the time you spend exhaling. *Diaphragmatic breathing* encourages you to use your full capacity for breathing, filling the lungs entirely with air, and also emphasizes a long, slow exhalation, thus relaxing.

Many people do not know how to breathe properly. If you observe yourself and others, you may notice that breathing is often done with the

chest, in short shallow breaths. This type of breathing (thoracic breathing) is thought to be indicative of unrecognized tension. It may also be detrimental to health, as it causes stale and unused air to be retained in the lungs. The healthy way to breathe is through diaphragmatic, or belly, breathing. This is the way that babies breathe. It is also the proper way to breathe for achieving body relaxation. Notice your actions throughout the day. Occasionally you may sit back, stretch, and sigh deeply. In doing so, you fill the lungs and the diaphragm completely with air and then let it all out slowly. This is your body's natural way of breathing.

The basic principles:

1. INHALE deeply, first filling the diaphragm area with air (stomach goes out). Continue inhaling as the lower part of the chest expands. Finish inhaling as the upper ribs are expanded and the top of the lungs fill with air.
2. EXHALE slowly. The air flows out smoothly from the top of the chest, down through the middle, and completely out as the stomach draws in.
3. REST. Allow yourself to experience the physical sensations that accompany breathing in this relaxing manner. Begin the process again by inhaling deeply.

The following exercise is designed to help you relax through proper breathing techniques. This technique can be used almost anytime or anywhere. Follow the steps. To prepare, find a quiet, peaceful place where there are no distractions. Lie down on the floor. Get as comfortable as possible. Loosen any tight-fitting clothing. If your shoes feel tight, you may wish to take them off. Move your arms and legs around to make your muscles loose.

The breathing technique:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Place your hands very lightly on your abdomen just below the navel with your fingertips touching.
3. Take a deep breath in and count slowly: one . . . two. . . three. . . four.

   As you inhale through your nose, your abdomen should swell out. This may feel a bit awkward at first if you are used to more shallow chest breathing. You may have to make a conscious effort to push your stomach. An alternative method for checking to see whether you are using your diaphragm appropriately is to make a "bridge" by placing an eleven

inch board on yourself from chest to abdomen. When you inhale, you should see the lower end of the bridge tilting higher.

4. After inhaling deeply, begin to exhale through the nose. Let the air out very slowly, counting one...two...three...four. Draw in the stomach so that your fingertips come together again. If necessary, make a conscious effort to pull in the stomach slightly.
5. Breathe in deeply: one. . .two. . .three. . .four.
6. Let the air out slowly: one. . .two. . .three. . .four.
7. Repeat this five more times.
8. Open your eyes.
9. How do you feel? _____

In order to allow yourself adequate practice in using this breathing pattern for relaxation, take a 3-to-5-minute "time-out" session twice a day, preferably at a set time each day, perhaps at noon or right after school or work hours. The technique is very useful when you want to become more at ease while undertaking a difficult task, such as before taking a test. This would be an excellent opportunity to practice this technique and to experience its positive results. By minimizing the tension-producing effects of test taking, you will gain confidence in using the technique in other settings where you might need it. Say to yourself when you want to use this technique, "Begin beathing slowly and deeply." Keep in mind that you are to breathe in deeply, exhale smoothly and slowly, and rest. If your thoughts slip away from concentrating on your breathing pattern, don't worry. Just redirect your thoughts and bring them back to your normal breathing. Focus on the air from the moment it enters your mouth until it enters the most distant reaches of your lungs. Picture the air making a return trip.

The breathing technique can be used alone or in combination with other relaxation exercises, such as muscle relaxation or visual imagery. Some young people find it helpful to imagine all of their tension "flowing" out as they exhale. As the breathing exercise is practiced in combination with muscle tension and relaxation, it may become possible to breathe in deeply, breathe out slowly, and automatically relax all of the muscles. It can thus serve as a quick and convenient way to relax and can be integrated into a busy and stressful day as many times as may be needed.

Visual Imagery: Achieving Mental Relaxation

It is possible to relax your mind, as well as your body and it is just as important. *Visual imagery* — sometimes called guided imagery or visualization —

is a powerful tool in relaxation. The goals of imagery are to reduce and control mental anxiety. Visual imagery is a technique to produce positive, relaxing images and thoughts. These images and thoughts can be used to block out intruding and upsetting thoughts. You can learn how to do this with imagery training. For example, you may be physically tired and yet be unable to sleep because of upsetting thoughts. By using pleasant visual images, you can control upsetting thoughts and enjoy a deep state of relaxation. Learning to control your thoughts involves knowing what you need to think about, practicing those thoughts, and then using them when you want to relax.

Mental imagery is a little like a daydream. You may want to start by trying to visualize a pleasant scene, perhaps one you have seen many times. Try to re-experience the scene in every way you can, including the use of images from senses such as smell (for example, the scent of flowers), touch (the feel of the grass beneath your feet), sound (the sound of birds singing in the trees), and taste (the salt air at the beach). Soothing music can also be used to achieve a calm state. When you practice visual imagery, you may want to add your favorite soothing music.

To become proficient at visual imagery, it is helpful to begin with exercises proceeding from simple to more complex images. The steps are outlined below. Each step is a plateau in the learning of imagery. Once you are able to visualize freely, begin to create your own images. Only you can experience and know what images are relaxing to you.

Be patient with yourself as you begin to learn mental relaxation. Complete concentration, even on pleasant images, requires a great deal of practice. Do not get upset if unwanted thoughts come to your mind. Simply redirect your thoughts.

To prepare, find a quiet place without distractions. Sit or lie down. Get comfortable. Loosen any tight-fitting clothing.

The Visualization Technique:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Relax your muscles. You may use breathing or muscle-relaxation exercises to become relaxed.
3. Take a deep breath. Imagine breathing in the clean air. As you breathe out, feel the relaxation spread over your body. As you take another breath, feel yourself floating down.
3. Tense and relax your muscles.
4. Imagine or picture yourself doing something relaxing. Get the full picture in your mind.
5. When you are finished, stretch your arms, take a deep breath, and open your eyes.

Here are some ideas for guiding visual imagery.

- You are lying on the beach, warm under the sun. The sand feels nice and soft underneath you. You're very calm and relaxed, almost falling asleep. The ocean breeze feels good against your skin. You can taste the salt air on your lips. You can hear the waves rolling in gently. You feel very comfortable, relaxed, peaceful, and calm...
- You are walking slowly through a beautiful green forest. The only sounds you can hear are the sounds of the birds in the distance and of water flowing over the waterfall in the distance. It is very peaceful, and you continue to walk slowly and quietly, enjoying the calmness and peacefulness. It is a warm day, but the forest is very comfortable. You have the forest all to yourself with nothing to disturb you. You begin to hum your favorite tune....
- It is a lazy Saturday morning. Everyone else is still asleep. A cool rain is falling outside, making gentle sounds that can be heard against your window. You are still sleepy. The fluffy covers on your bed are warm and soft. You bask in the thought of not having to get up, and you turn over and begin to daydream about something you like....

Creating Your Own Visualization.

It's wise to practice the visualization exercise and then to create some of your own ideas. Look at the following questions. Using your imagination, create your own relaxing picture.

1. Name a place that makes you feel relaxed. _____

   _____

2. Put yourself in a beautiful and serene setting. What are you doing?

   _____

3. What's the weather like there? _____

   _____

4. How do you feel when you are there? _____

   _____

5. Why would you like to return? _____

   _____

While learning this technique, practice it two or three times each week. Make a point of taking time out for visual imagery relaxation, describing how you feel afterward: "That is a fantastic feeling. I really feel mentally calm now."

Visual imagery can be used for tasks other than relaxing. As you see yourself in conflict or problem situations, try to imagine yourself dealing successfully with the situation. When you think about your thoughts, you have a better chance to be in charge of your emotions and are more likely to be in control of your behavior.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR SELF

Diet and Nutrition

Diet and nutrition contribute to good health and play an important role in alleviating stress. As health experts say, to a great extent "we are what we eat."

Good health depends on a balanced diet. A deficiency of certain vitamins, minerals, and nutrients can upset body chemistry. Any diet that emphasizes one type of food (proteins, vegetables, carbohydrates) to the exclusion of other foods may be very harmful to the body. When the body is deprived of basic nourishment, resulting in a deficiency of essential nutrients, it is even less capable of withstanding the effects of stress, and even more susceptible to major health breakdowns.

Brain cells, like the rest of the body, require proper feeding in order to function correctly. The brain is the body's most chemically sensitive organ. Deprived of proper nutrients or overwhelmed by toxic pollutants, the brain cannot perform at peak efficiency. Recent studies indicate that too much sugar, vitamin deficiencies, lead pollution, and food allergies can seriously disrupt the brain's ability to function normally and effectively.

The connection between nutrition and stress behavior is well documented. The U.S. Senate Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs has established the following dietary goals for balanced nutrition:

1. Consume only as many calories as are expended. If overweight, decrease caloric consumption and increase physical activity.
2. Increase the intake of complex carbohydrates and natural sugars from about 28% to about 48% of total calories consumed.
3. Reduce the intake of refined and processed sugars to account for no more than 10% of total caloric consumption.
4. Reduce overall fat intake from approximately 40% to about 30% of caloric consumption.
5. Reduce saturated-fat intake to account for about 10% of total caloric consumption. Balance it with polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, each of which should also account for about 10 percent of caloric consumption.
6. Reduce cholesterol consumption to about 300 milligrams a day.

7. Limit the intake of sodium by reducing the intake of salt to about 5 grams a day.

The goals suggest the following changes in food selection and preparation:

1. Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
2. Decrease consumption of refined and other processed sugars and foods high in such sugars.
3. Decrease consumption of foods high in total fat, and partially replace saturated fats, whether obtained from animal or vegetable sources, with polyunsaturated fats.
4. Decrease consumption of animal fat and choose meats, poultry, and fish that will reduce saturated-fat intake.
5. Except for young children, substitute low-fat and nonfat milk for whole milk and low-fat dairy products for high-fat dairy products.
6. Decrease consumption of butterfat, eggs, and other high-cholesterol foods.
7. Decrease consumption of salt and of foods with a high salt content.

Can you list what you had to eat today? What did you have for dinner yesterday? When was the last time you had proteins, carbohydrates, and a full complement of vitamins and minerals all in one meal? You probably aren't aware of your eating habits but you should be. Diet and nutrition play a vital role in your life. When your body lacks essential nutrients, it cannot function properly. Research has found that those individuals who have breakfast and lunch show significant improvements in overall performance on tasks demanding attentiveness and alertness.

You are responsible for good dietary habits.

1. **Breakfast is a MUST**. Breakfast must not be missed and should consist of fruits and grains which will steadily release glucose during the day, giving fuel to the brain. Planning the night before can help to make breakfast time a little easier. If the breakfast table is set with all of the plates, bowls, glasses and silverware, you will be more likely to eat something nutritious in the morning to get your day off to the right start.
2. **Caloric Intake**. All young people need three meals a day, with an emphasis on dark green and yellow vegetables, whole grain or enriched cereals and breads, and milk. If you are active or engaged in strenuous physical activities, you also need snacks rich in protein, minerals, and

vitamins. Adolescent girls need about 2,500 - 2,700 calories a day; adolescent boys need about 2,800 - 3,000 calories daily.

3. **Nutrition and Balance**. In all, the body needs about 47 different nutritional substances to sustain its internal chemistry. Nutritionists agree that eating a balanced diet is the best way to get the proper mix of nutrients. Sometimes, though, vitamin supplementation is needed to replace the supply of nutrients robbed by the effects of chemical pollutants and other pollution, and to help maintain the body's natural defense against stress. Vitamins can also help improve general resistance to illness. Taking a one-a-day vitamin tablet that contains all the essential vitamins and nutrients may be a good idea, but, all other (mega) doses of single vitamins and nutrients should be taken only on the advice of a physician. The best advice when it comes to vitamin supplementation is this: a balanced diet should provide all the essential nutrients.

Fitness and Exercise

Many people asume they get sufficient physical activity when in fact this may not be true. Are you getting the proper amount of exercise required for good health? Following is a summary of some of the benefits of exercise:

1. increased circulation
2. assistance to heart
3. added oxygen to the body
4. improved digestion
5. relaxed nerves, balanced emotions
6. increased resistance to disease
7. reduced fatigue
8. strengthened muscles, bones, and ligaments
9. improved figure and complexion
10. sharpened mental powers

Here's how you can take an active role in increasing your fitness through exercise.

1. **Think Fitness**. If you aren't fit, work toward it. If you are fit, stay fit. When you were little, you probably loved taking walks, bicycling to the park, swimming at the lake. As you became older, you probably pulled away from such activities, preferring to spend more sedentary time on

your own and with friends. But you still have a need for rigorous physical activity, and it needn't exclude family and friends. Saturdays and Sundays are a good time for outings, especially if your week is crowded with activities and excludes opportunities for exercise. Going to the beach, camping, hiking, and bicycling can be a regular part of your time with friends and family. Activities should include physical fitness routines; working together in the spirit of fun and cooperation is one way to make fitness a total part of your health routine.

2. **Challenge Exercise**. Get involved in activities where you can channel the need for risk, adventure, and challenge in a productive and positive way. Don't depend on the school to do this, and don't assume that it is the school's responsibility (or anyone else's) to keep you fit.

   If you have had it with calisthenics in gym class, which do not necessarily do much for the cardiovascular system anyway, an alternative is a new way of thinking about fitness called Challenge Exercise (CE). CE adds a new dimension to the concept of physical fitness with the element of challenge. This challenge adds the bonus of mental well-being to the well-known euphoric experience of exercise, with a degree of well-being rarely experienced after a nonchallenge exercise. It is believed that it is this experience, rather than the fact that exercise is good for the body, that makes people return to CE sports.

   Examples of CE sports are swimming, skiing, surfing, horseback riding, motorcycling, bicycling, mountain and rock climbing, scuba diving, and other activities that combine a high degree of physical and mental coordination. (Non-CE sports are those such as calisthenics, jogging, walking, or a game of golf with a motor cart.) Because of its benefits to both mind and body, CE provides an excellent means of reducing stress.

3. **Team Sports**. Team sports provide an opportunity to stay fit and have fun. Have you ever watched your friends during swim-team practice? Undoubtedly, they get as much exercise horsing around with friends as from the formal practice. The same is true of baseball practice, soccer games, and other team sport activities. Additionally, interacting with others allows you to do a lot of shouting and screaming, releasing some of your aggression and lessening stress. It would be a little odd for you to jog alone, yelling at the top of your lungs; doing so during team practice is encouraged and is a great way to blow off steam.

4. **Personal Commitment**. Readers Digest special report on fitness suggests four specific ways to get involved in physical fitness. These are:
   - Sign A Contract. Write down one fitness goal for the month. For example, "I want to be able to run one mile nonstop." Sign and date the contract and have it co-signed by a friend or family member.

- Exercise. Agree to exercise one half-hour before watching TV, or just before dinner. If schedules are too complicated during the week, set a time on Saturday and Sunday.
- Record Your Scores. Post a chart on the mirror in your room for the scores. Update the chart each time you retake the test and record each workout.
- Reward Achievements. When you reach a goal, give yourself a prize (fitness clothing or sports equipment, a new record).

5. **Build Fitness Slowly and Regularly**. The essential component of any effective health program is that it be aerobic in nature. Aerobic means a level that requires you to exert a good deal of effort, but which doesn't consume oxygen faster than your heart and lungs can supply it. Experts recommend three sessions of vigorous activity weekly, with each session lasting from 20 to 30 minutes. These can include walking, swimming, bicyling, aerobics, jazzercise, and so on. Remember, however, to start off slowly if you are not in shape. Pick up your pace and raise your expectations as your body adjusts to your regimen. Consult your physician if you are overweight, afflicted with any health problems, or in doubt about the status of your health.

Getting Help

When you are under too much stress for you to handle on your own, you could use help. Support groups, whether teens helping teens, or parents helping teens, can be an excellent way of learning more about the stress. Getting together with friends who will listen and share things with you can also be therapeutic.

Young people who have developed a source of social support, who have close friendships, strong family ties, and warm relationships with friends and peers, generally deal more effectively with stressful events than those who are socially isolated. Therefore, expanding social and personal contacts can be an effective coping device. People are an essential part of our life. They provide objectivity, reassurance, fun and warmth, and additional perspective. Those people you care for and who care for you can provide support, advice, comfort, and protection during troubled times.

There are many ways you can expand your social network. Join a social organization, sports club, or church group. Broaden your range of interests and activities and invite others to join you. Look up old friends and keep in contact with your family. By demonstrating your interest in others, and in their ideas, activities, and feelings, you will provide the basis for establishing deep and lasting relationships.

Professional Help. There are times when another sympathetic individual is not able to give you all the help you need. Although many stress-related symptoms clear up when the stressor is removed or the emotional difficulty subsides, chronic problems may require the attention of a specialist. Severe depression or overwhelming family or emotional problems, drug or alcohol use are examples of problems that should be dealt with under the guidance of a professional.

A counselor will not tell you how to live your life, but he or she can provide guidelines to follow in evaluating your situation. Having a professional to talk to about your particular difficulties in getting and staying well is conducive to achieving these goals.

Using Your Newly Acquired Skills

Now that you have reviewed and acquired stress management skills, you will want to use them. You must incorporate them into your lifestyle if they are to be of use. The goal is to keep using what you have learned. The degree of change will depend on how much effort you invest in the process.

Tracking stress and keeping records on the effectiveness of the techniques you use to cope with stress is an excellent way to sharpen your skills in managing stress. It can help you change an undesired behavior, and maintain a desired one.

Many young people have found the following worksheet helpful.

Stress Contract

I, _____, am making a commitment to myself to: _____

_____

_____

I will do this by the following technique: _____

_____

I will do this (how often): _____

_____

I am doing this so that: _____

_____

I will reward myself by feeling good about myself and: _____

_____

_____

_____
(Signature)

_____
(Date)

Completed ☐ Not completed ☐

My Reward will be:

_____

_____

_____

You can learn to reduce the wear and tear of every day stress. Life **can** be MORE the bowl of cherries you want it to be! It's up to you.

Suggested Readings

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HELP ORGANIZATIONS

Many organizations, some with toll-free 800 phone numbers, provide helpful information. Among them:

Stress:

The American Institute of Stress, 124 Park Avenue, Yonkers, New York 10703. (914) 063-1200.

Drugs:

Fair Oaks Hospital, 19 Prospect Street, Summit, N.J. 07901, 1-800-COCAINE.
National Institute on Drug Abuse, P.O. Box 2305, Rockville, MD 20852.

Alcohol:

Alcoholics Anonymous. General Service Board, New York, NY 10016.

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship of men and women who share the common problem of alcoholism. Family members of alcoholics can receive help through groups associated with Alcoholics Anonymous, mainly Al-Anon and Al-Ateen. Al-Ateen, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, P.O. Box 182, New York, NY, 10159-0182. Local Alateen chapters are listed in the telephone directory, or contact a local Al-Anon group for more information.

Family Stress:

Check the telephone directory under Family Services Agencies or contact the United Way organization in your area for the Family Services Agency nearest you. These organizations offer a variety of counseling services.

Stepfamily Association of America. 28 Allegheny Avenue, Suite 1037, Baltimore, MD. 21204, (301) 823-7570

The national Stepfamily Association provides information about local chapters and issues a newsletter. Local chapters offer classes, workshops, and support groups for blended families. Some classes, workshops, and services free.

Crisis Centers:

Crisis counseling and information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Hotline: 1/800/352-0386 (in California); 1/800/421-6353 elsewhere.

For the name of a runaway or teen crisis shelter in your area, write:

National Youth Work Alliance. 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington D.C. 20036.

or call

National Runaway Switchboard, (800) 621-4000.

Suicide Prevention:

Almost every state has one or more suicide hotlines and suicide prevention centers. Check with your local phone operator for the hotline number in your area.

TAPES

The following tapes may be obtained by writing to: Parents and Friends of Gays or Friends of Lesbians and Gays, P.O. Box 24528 Los Angeles, CA 90024.

"Facts and Misconceptions about Homosexuality"
"Current Status of Social Research on Homosexuality"
"Lesbian Adolescents"

"How to Make and Maintain Friendships." Psychology Magazine, Psychology Today Tapes, P.O. Box 770, Pratt Station, New York 11205.

The following cassette selections are excellent for relaxation and guided imagery activities. They can found in most music stores.

- Spectrum Suite
- Starborn Suite
- Zodiac Suite
- VOLUME 1: MUSIC FOR AN INNER JOURNEY
  VOLUME II: OMNI SUITE
  VOLUME III: SIMPLICITY

MAGAZINES

Teen Connection, U.S.A., 240 E. 47th Street, Suite 31E, New York, NY, 10017.

Children and Teens Today, 2315 Broadway, New York, NY 10024.

A comprehensive guide to help young people *themselves* — ages 12-20 — understand and cope with stress, pressure and anxiety.

"*A Stress-Management Guide for Young People* is an invaluable guide for those working with young people; parents, educators, counselors, child and family therapists." **Wendy Rue**, Publisher, *Teen Connection U.S.A*

Dr. Bettie B. Youngs is an internationally known author, counselor and consultant. She is a former Teacher-of-the-Year, Professor at San Diego State University, and Executive Director of the Phoenix Foundation. She is the author of a number of books including *Stress in Children*, now published in 7 languages; *Helping Your Teenager: A Parents Guide to the Adolescent Years; Achievement, Happiness, Popularity & Success: A Self-Esteem Book for Young Adults; The 6 Vital Ingredients of Self-Esteem and How to Develop Them in Your Child;* and, *Friendship Is Forever, Isn't It?* A noted authority on the topic of stress and wellness, Dr. Youngs lectures throughout the world, and is a frequent guest on radio and television talk shows.

Stress strikes young people just as powerfully as it does adults. But young people are especially susceptible because they lack the experience and verbal skills necessary to recognize and discuss their stress-related problems, much less cope with them. They may take drastic measures to try to relieve that stress. In their desire to escape from pain, many take routes that lead them into problems more overwhelming than those they were trying to escape.

If young people are to maintain a high level of emotional and physical well-being, they must learn to understand stress and its manifestations. They must learn ways to successfully manage stress and to turn it to their advantage. *A Stress-Management Guide for Young People* provides practical "hands on" exercises to give the young person the information and skills to use stress constructively to promote health, fitness, and self-development.

On Dr. Bettie Youngs' earlier book, *Stress In Children*

"Enormously impressive! Its analysis of the nature of stress and its recommendations for helping young people develop stress management skills are brilliantly developed and presented." **Dr. Norman Cousins**

"An important and welcome contribution to the subject of stress in young people!" **Robert Muller**, *Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations*

"A well-conceived work that isn't just lists of things to do and avoid. Practical, readable and deserving of a place in many homes and schools." **National Library – Kirkus Review**

"A must for young people!" **Publishers Weekly**

ISBN: 0-940221-00-4

$ 9.95

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